



## Inside:

- Brotherhood Commission leader dies
- Christmas card contest deadline Nov. 9
- Here she is ... 115 years strong
- Key ballot measures for Nov. 8 election
- Election exposes Evangelical divide

## ABSC agencies report work

Baptist agencies report of God's work across Arkansas  
page 8



## Siloam receives \$1M gift

Margaret Colson  
*Arkansas Baptist News*

SILOAM SPRINGS - When Charles and Genevieve Bonner heard about the hundreds of young lives transformed spiritually each year at Camp Siloam, they decided to make a "transformative gift" of \$1 million to help the Arkansas Baptist camp build a desperately needed new dining hall.

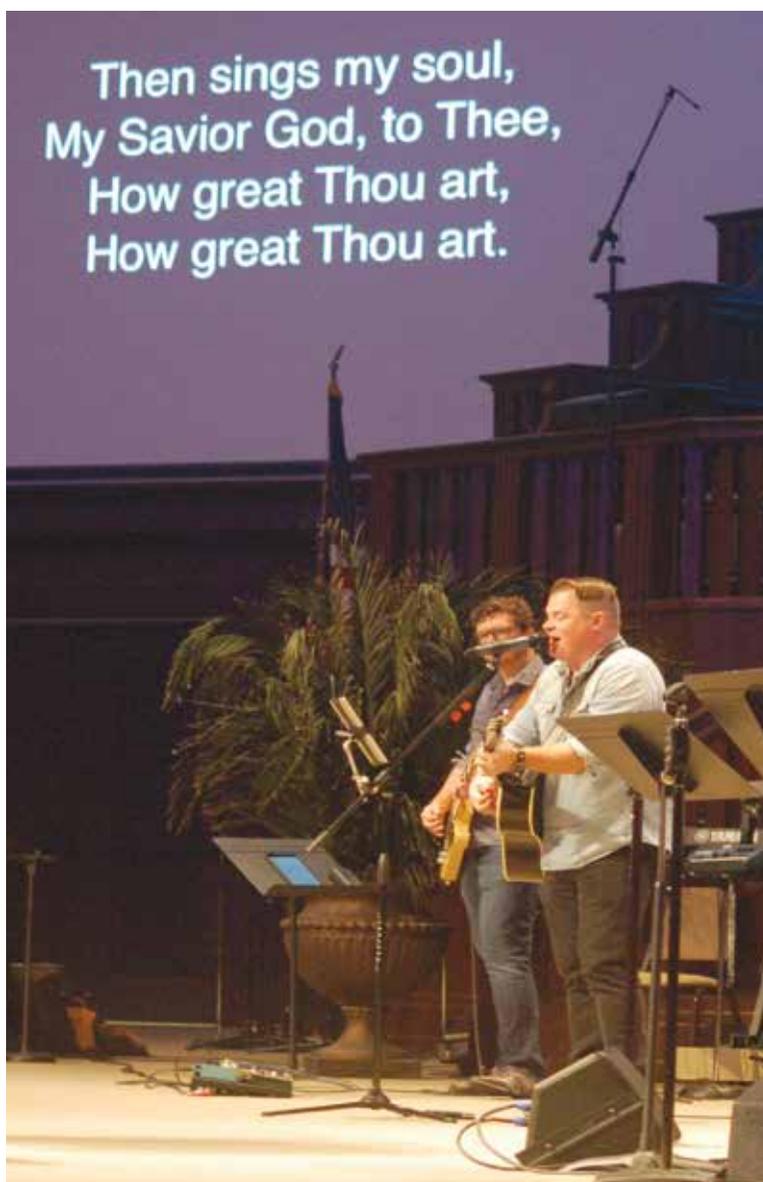
The current 93-year-old dining hall had to be replaced, according to a structural engineer, health inspector and fire marshal, but the price tag of doing so was estimated to be in the millions, said Jason Wilkie, Camp Siloam executive director.

Camp Siloam leaders sensed a vision from God to build the new dining hall, set a goal of \$3.4 million and launched the Feed My Sheep campaign, even as Wilkie's campaign coach was telling him that the camp would need a "transformative gift from outside the camp's network of people" to meet the lofty goal.

"You don't have what it takes to make this happen," Wilkie was told.

"The need was big enough that we needed God to work," said Wilkie, who called on his friends, colleagues, board members and anyone who would listen to begin praying. For 20 months the year-round staff of Camp Siloam prayed, "asking the Lord to touch the heart of someone who was not in their base

See **GIFT** page 2



Scott Quimby of First Baptist Church, Stuttgart, leads worship during the opening session of the 163rd annual meeting of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention.

## 'Engage' draws Baptists to LR

LITTLE ROCK - Focusing on Engage as its theme, that's exactly what messengers and guests did who attended the 163rd annual meeting of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC) held Oct. 25-26 at Immanuel Baptist Church in Little Rock.

During the two-day meeting Arkansas Baptists worshipped together, prayed together, conducted business, approved resolutions and heard inspiring messages from a number of speakers.

ABSC leaders reported 545 registered messengers from various churches across the state. Since ABSC does not record guest attendance, the actual number of attendees was much higher. Messengers attending the 2015 annual meeting in Hot Springs numbered 615.

Comparatively, messengers at the 2014 meeting in Texarkana numbered 515, while the 2013 meeting in Rogers attracted 591 messengers.

Sam Roberts, pastor of First

Baptist Church, Stuttgart, was re-elected president of the convention after serving the unexpired term of Gary Hollingsworth, who was elected executive director of the South Carolina Baptist Convention shortly following his election as president.

Other officers elected were John McCallum, pastor of First Baptist Church, Hot Springs, first vice president, and Craig Collier, pastor of Mount Pisgah Baptist Church, Jacksonville, second vice president.

Messengers approved a total of eight resolutions, including resolutions addressing human trafficking, gender dysphoria, medical marijuana, religious liberty and racial reconciliation. (See pages 10-11 for details.)

ABSC Executive Board teams and ministries and Arkansas Baptists shared various reports during the meeting, including testimonies about

See **ENGAGE** page 11

## Apologetics ed critical to reaching culture

Caleb Yarbrough  
*Arkansas Baptist News*

MENA - The origins of life, the earth and spirituality are some of the most studied and discussed topics within religious and scientific circles. For Christians, Scripture provides a framework for understanding creation and the world around us. However, when called upon to give a defense

of their faith, many self-professed followers of Christ are unable to do so in any meaningful fashion.

And that is a major problem, said Steve Ellison, associational missionary for Ouachita Baptist Association in Mena.

"I believe the church is losing whole generations because we have failed to challenge the proclamation of scientific theory as established fact," El-

lison said. "These issues are not insignificant side issues. Rather, they call into question the truth and authority of the Bible."

Ellison, and his wife, Malea, were first introduced to Creation Apologetics Teachers' College (CATC) by Mike Riddle, president and education specialist of Christian Training Initiative (CTI), in September 2015 when Riddle taught a

one-day apologetics seminar in Ouachita Baptist Association.

To better prepare themselves to teach Christians how to defend their faith, the Ellisons recently attended a CATC event at Ridgecrest, a LifeWay conference center in Black Mountain, N.C. The training was intended to give participants the

See **APOLOGETICS** page 3

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**WILLIAMS**  
BAPTIST COLLEGE

## ABN Digest

Stories of interest  
to Arkansas Baptists

### American history museum to examine U.S. religion

WASHINGTON – The role of religion in the formation and development of the United States is at the heart of a new multi-year initiative launching at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History Nov. 5.

Beginning with a program series on sacred music in American life, the comprehensive religion initiative will be led by Peter Manseau who has been named the museum's Lilly Endowment Curator of American Religious History. It will include collecting, researching, documenting and exhibiting materials as well as presenting programs reflective of the country's diverse religious traditions.

A \$5 million grant from Lilly Endowment Inc. provides for a permanent curator of religion in the museum's Home and Community Life division and a five-year multifaceted program consisting of scholarship, future exhibition planning and performances exploring religious faith through music and theater.

A gift from the museum's board chairman, former Ambassador to Romania Nicholas Taubman, funded the creation of the Nicholas F. and Eugenia Taubman Gallery where "Religion in Early America" will open June 28 as the inaugural exhibition. This temporary one-year exhibition will be the museum's first to illustrate the influence of religion in early American history, from the Colonial period until the 1840s.

"Religion has had an indelible impact on our nation's history since our earliest days and is fundamental to our understanding of American life today," said John Gray, the museum's director.

For more ABN Digest, go to  
[arkansasbaptist.org/abn-digest](http://arkansasbaptist.org/abn-digest)

# Christmas card contest deadline Nov. 9

LITTLE ROCK – Here's your chance to get your own Christmas card ... sort of.

It's countdown time to enter the *Arkansas Baptist News* (ABN) fifth annual Christmas card design contest.

"Already, we have received some great entries, but interesting enough, no photos have been submitted for cards after we opened it up to photography this year," said Tim Yarbrough, ABN editor/executive director.

"We are excited to invite *Arkansas Baptist News* subscribers to submit their artwork and photographs for consideration," he added. "We look forward to receiving each

entry and the creativity each represents – whether it is in the form of original artwork or a photograph related to the Christmas holiday."

The winning design will be selected by ABN staff as the best depiction a religious Christmas scene that illustrates one of the most important Christian holidays.

Submissions must be an original artistic design or an original photograph, with the winning design published in an upcoming edition of the ABN and will be used as the newspaper's official 2016 Christmas card, which is mailed to Southern Baptist entities and colleagues.

All entries must be received by Nov. 9 and will be judged by the ABN staff. The person with the winning entry will receive a \$100 gift certificate in addition to having their card printed. Extra cards are provided to the winner as well.

Entries must be emailed in high-quality format to [abn@arkansasbaptist.org](mailto:abn@arkansasbaptist.org). Art or photographs too large to be emailed may be submitted via mail on digital media to ABN Christmas Card Contest, 10 Remington Drive, Little Rock, AR 72204. Submissions become the property of the ABN and will not be returned.

Contest submissions will be accepted from all ages. Each

entry should be accompanied by a brief biography (100-200 words) and photo of the designer/artist or photographer.

Art or photographs submitted must be the artist's own original work or creation and become the property of the ABN for reproduction and distribution.

Contestants must currently be a member of an Arkansas Baptist church and must be an ABN subscriber (or the child of a current subscriber if the contestant is under age 18) either through church or individual plans.

For all rules, visit [arkansasbaptist.org/christmas-card-contest](http://arkansasbaptist.org/christmas-card-contest).

## GIFT

*continued from page one*

of donors," he said.

After those 20 months, "I hate to say it, but I was having my doubts as to whether we had misunderstood God's vision for the camp," said Wilkie, who had even begun having discussions about reducing the campaign's scope.

What Wilkie didn't know at the time was that "God had been at work in the lives of Charles and Genevieve Bonner . . . long before the need of the camp was even known," he said.

"The Bonners are genuinely sweet and kind people who have lived a life of sacrifice," said Bobby Thomas, president and CEO of the Arkansas Baptist Foundation (ABF). The Bonners, married for more than 50 years, had long been faithful church members at First Baptist Church, Pine Bluff, where they raised their three children, and are now members of Woodland Heights Baptist Church, Conway.

"Charles went to work every day for more than 40 years," in a successful banking career, said Thomas.

"Having worked in a bank, I believed very much in saving money and watching it grow," said Bonner.

His career in banking and involvement as a Southern Baptist layman led him to cross paths with David Moore, former president and CEO of the ABF, and Bonner was

asked to serve on the ABF board of trustees.

"The help we've gotten from the Foundation for our accounts has been so good," said Bonner. "David was so instrumental for Genevieve and me."

As Moore retired and Thomas accepted the ABF leadership role, the Foundation began "evaluating its philosophy as a ministry," said Thomas.

"We were talking about storing up treasures in heaven, not here on earth, and using resources for kingdom ministry. I was able to encourage Charles and Genevieve to consider making gifts during their lifetime so they could experience the joy and generosity of giving and be an example to their adult children," said Thomas, who also challenged the couple to read the book, "The Choice."

Even as the ABF's philosophy evaluation was occurring, Thomas invited Arkansas Baptist agency leaders to speak to trustees, describing their ministries and needs.

The first person to speak to ABF trustees was Wilkie, who described not only the impact of Camp Siloam on young lives but also the pressing need for a new dining hall. Soon, Wilkie answered a request from the Bonners to tour the camp.

"We give lots of tours of the camp," said Wilkie. "I love telling the stories of what God is doing here. I had no idea how God had been working in the lives of the Bonner family."

"I know the importance of a camp and how God can use



Jason Wilkie (left), Camp Siloam executive director, and Bobby Thomas (right), president of the Arkansas Baptist Foundation, recognize Genevieve and Charles Bonner for their \$1 million gift to Camp Siloam in support of the Feed My Sheep campaign to build a new state-of-the-art dining facility.

counselors to share the Lord," said Bonner. "Jason laid out the vision for the camp. We heard the history and his enthusiasm of what could be done, even in difficult times. But it (the need for a new dining hall) was life or death for the ministry of the camp."

On October 1, after touring the camp with their adult children, the Bonners told Wilkie they wanted to give \$1 million to the Feed My Sheep campaign.

"The Bonners chose to honor God with all they had in the fullness of His provision with assets they had been careful to steward over their lifetime," said Thomas. "Many people aren't willing to make that step. People accumulate wealth and say, 'It's mine.' The Bonners took that final step of obedience."

Mike Seabaugh, pastor of Central Baptist Church, Mag-

nolia, serves on the Camp Siloam board, and his wife serves on the ABF board. When he heard of the \$1 million gift coming through the ABF to build a new dining hall at the camp, he said that he was "overwhelmed," and cried "tears of joy ... relief ... passion ... and longing."

Today the Feed My Sheep campaign has raised \$2,063,175 toward its \$3.4 million goal.

"We would not be where we are without the generosity of more than 600 Arkansas Baptists giving to this campaign and the support of our churches. There is no doubt that God is at work at Camp Siloam. I hope the Bonner family's gift will inspire others to use the Foundation to bless the ministry of Arkansas Baptists and its agencies," said Wilkie.

Contact Margaret Colson at [margaret@arkansasbaptist.org](mailto:margaret@arkansasbaptist.org).

# Smith, who led Brotherhood, dies at 95

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP) – James H. Smith, former executive secretary of the Illinois Baptist State Association and later the fifth Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission president, died Oct. 21 in Memphis. He was 95.

Known for his vivacious disposition and preaching, Smith spent nearly 50 years in Southern Baptist leadership. At the time of his retirement in 1991 from the Brotherhood Commission where he served 12 years, the agency accounted for more than 530,000 men and boys involved in missions.

“He was acknowledged by his staff as a leader who placed the role of the local church in the prominent position of providing manpower to reach the world for Christ, and he saw himself as a pastoral leader to his staff,” said Jack Childs of Memphis, former Brotherhood Commission vice president of support services, who served the agency 36 years.

Born in Somerville, Ala., May 26, 1921, Smith professed faith in Christ at age 18. Soon, his mother ordered a family Bible from Sears, one that Smith described as having pictures and a concordance. It wasn't long until he was “preaching” to livestock on their farm.

Upon high school graduation, Smith went to Moody Bible Institute (MBI) in Chicago at age 18 with \$54. He didn't meet the school's entrance requirements due to his age, lack of funds and having

made a profession of faith in Christ less than a year before arriving. So he audited classes there and worked as a janitor until MBI accepted him as a full-time student.

In 1943, the Navy drafted Smith for ship duty in the South Pacific. He led Sunday services in the absence of an official chaplain. Smith credited the Navy with helping him to discover his leadership skills.

Smith continued his education after the war and earned a doctor of theology degree in New Testament Greek from Central Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Kan., in 1955. He served in pastorates for 20 years in Westville, Okla.; Paris, Ark.; Shawnee, Okla.; Kansas City, Mo.; and Ferguson, Mo.

Preaching and other public speaking engagements were the cornerstone of his ministry and kept him on the road and in the air. During his first five years as the Illinois Baptist executive secretary, he spoke more than 880 times. To fulfill those commitments, Smith earned a private pilot's license and began flying a single-engine aircraft to engagements. He once described his worldwide preaching opportunities as “a sacred trust.”

“He never lost his zeal for preaching,” Childs said of Smith, who was only the second ordained minister to lead the Brotherhood Commission.

Smith went to the Brother-

hood Commission following the tragic death of former president Glendon McCullough who died in an automobile accident. Among Smith's first objectives was to clarify the agency's purpose.

“The single most significant contribution that I have made to the Brotherhood Commission was clarifying our statement of purpose and keeping us on it,” Smith said in 1991.

That statement was “helping churches involve men and boys in missions.” By staying focused on that purpose statement, Smith kept the agency away from divisive social and political issues and centered on missions.

During his tenure at the Brotherhood Commission, the missions education agency advanced its assignment from the Southern Baptist Convention with the following achievements:

– In 1987, Smith led the Brotherhood Commission to overhaul its programs, another result of the mission statement, with more emphasis on age-group curriculum.

– The Brotherhood Commission pioneered coed missions first with church renewal, a ministry assignment it shared with the former Home Mission Board.

– Coed missions continued to grow through the National Fellowship of Baptist Men, which became a part of the



Smith

## APOLOGETICS

*continued from page one*

tools necessary to train others to conduct similar apologetics seminars.

While the course the Ellisons participated in focused primarily on issues pertaining to creation, Ellison said, “There was also much about moral relativism, the emergent church, the sanctity of life, biblical marriage, etc.”

Ellison said that he believes the content he learned in participating in the CATC course is “of extreme and urgent importance,” and he is currently available to teach the course to other Arkansans.

“I would like to begin teach-

ing this material as soon as possible. I would be willing to go anywhere we could get 10 or 15 students together,” said Ellison. “Anyone who wants to learn is my target audience. Those who teach in any capacity are strongly encouraged to attend.”

Conducted over multiple sessions, the apologetics seminar the Ellisons teach is split into 21 chapters and extensively addresses issues regarding “biblical creation” and “basic apologetics.”

The course outlines 15 major objectives consisting of teachings on major concepts within Christian theology and how to overcome objections to the Christian worldview from non-believers and those hostile to the faith.

“Challenging these theories is becoming increasingly dangerous. Scientists are ostracized and lose government funding for research projects. Teachers lose their jobs. Therefore, the ‘party line’ is toed, and no alternatives are presented. Dissent is simply not allowed,” said Ellison.

“Our church members, and especially our young people, are being bombarded with repetitious falsehood. The implications for the gospel of Jesus Christ are incredible,” he said.

If you are interested in having an apologetics seminar at your church or organization, contact Ellison at pastorsteve8800@gmail.com or 479-394-3534.

Contact Caleb Yarbrough at [caleb@arkansasbaptist.org](mailto:caleb@arkansasbaptist.org).

## ABN Digest

Stories of interest  
to Arkansas Baptists

### New Orleans to open Rogers preaching center

NEW ORLEANS (BP) – New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary (NOBTS) trustees have approved the establishment of an Adrian Rogers Center for Expository Preaching.

Additional initiatives also were approved during the trustees' fall meeting to enhance the training of local church pastors and other church leaders – a Christian leadership major in the doctor of philosophy program and several enhancements to the seminary's master of divinity program.



Rogers

“Dr. Adrian Rogers is one of the most significant alumni in the history of NOBTS – well-known for a lifetime of excellent expository preaching,” President Chuck Kelley said following the trustee meeting.

“This center will enhance our ability to train students and prepare them to open God's Word and teach through great expository preaching over the years of their ministry.”

Rogers, who died in 2005 after 33 years as pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in Cordova, Tenn., earned the bachelor of divinity (equivalent to today's master of divinity) at NOBTS in 1958. The Memphis-area pastor and three-time SBC president, launched his radio and television ministry “Love Worth Finding” in 1987. Through Love Worth Finding, millions of people were impacted through Rogers' preaching.

The center is set to open in January 2017. Visit [nobts.edu/rogerscenter](http://nobts.edu/rogerscenter) for more information.

For more ABN Digest, go to [arkansasbaptist.org/abn-digest](http://arkansasbaptist.org/abn-digest)

Brotherhood Commission's adult division. The formation of fellowships to recruit volunteers based on vocations and avocations attracted many women, particularly in the education fellowship.

– In 1990, the Brotherhood Commission piloted World Changers, a coed missions education and mission action ministry for Southern Baptist youth. World Changers grew from 137 participants in one East Tennessee project to mobilizing more than 20,000 participants annually in cities and communities across North America and internationally.

– The Brotherhood Commission became the coordinating agency for Southern Baptist Disaster Relief and hired the first national disaster relief director. Among the major disasters SBDR responded to included Hurricane Hugo in 1989, leading to a major operation in South Carolina and to one of its first long-term recovery projects in St. Croix.

In 1980, Smith envisioned 1 million Southern Baptist men participating in missions by 2000. The goal aligned with the SBC's long-term Bold Mission Thrust objective to reach the entire world with the gospel by 2000.

Before the SBC dissolved its relationship with the Baptist World Alliance in 2004, the Brotherhood Commission was active in that organization's men's department. Meeting in Amman, Jordan, in 1987, Smith challenged BWA to send 100,000 Bibles to Russia, which was still a closed country at the time. Southern Baptists led in the successful worldwide effort.

Smith maintained a youthful-type energy even after retirement as he pastored churches in Memphis, focusing mostly on church revitalization.

The Brotherhood Commission eventually merged with the Home Mission Board and the Radio and Television Commission to become the North American Mission Board in June 1997.

Smith's wife Nona Lee Lockwood preceded him in death, as did one son, David. His surviving children include John, Joy and Mark.

Funeral services were held Oct. 24 at Leawood Baptist Church in Memphis.

# 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)

## Here she is ... 115 years strong

*Editor's Note: Following is the text of the Arkansas Baptist News presentation to the Arkansas Baptist State Convention Oct. 26.*

Here she is. Your state Baptist newspaper.

Her name may have changed over time, but for 115 years she has served Arkansas Baptists faithfully, surviving two world wars, the Great Depression, social and cultural upheaval – all the while documenting the rise and influence of the Southern Baptist denomination across our state, nation and world.

In many ways, she is a mirror into the soul of our denomination – its triumphs, its strengths, its weaknesses and its failures.



### Pressing On

Tim Yarbrough

Phil. 3:14

Even today, as she reports on the activities of Arkansas Baptists, she is the leading religious voice in the state – second to none – in addition to being one of the most widely circulated newspapers

of any kind in Arkansas.

However, to remain a strong, independent voice for Baptists,

she has had to change with the times.

While clothed in the glory of miles of newsprint requiring barrels of ink since her birth, today you can find her in your inbox or on your iPad just as easily as in your mailbox.

She is literally everywhere: She's a popular Facebook friend providing updates to thousands daily; she has a

Twitter account where she posts breaking news and features regularly, and, of course she is always online any time of day at arkansasbaptist.org with something interesting to read.

Yes, in 2016 – 115 years after messengers like you gave her life at an annual meeting like this in Paragould – she stands strong for the Southern Baptist faith, faithfully telling our story and how individually and collectively we are striving to reach the world for our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

She is patient as she helps us understand and make sense of the times in which we live and points us to the hope and a future found only in Jesus Christ.

Her original charge from 1901 is as true today as ever as a testament to her faithful-

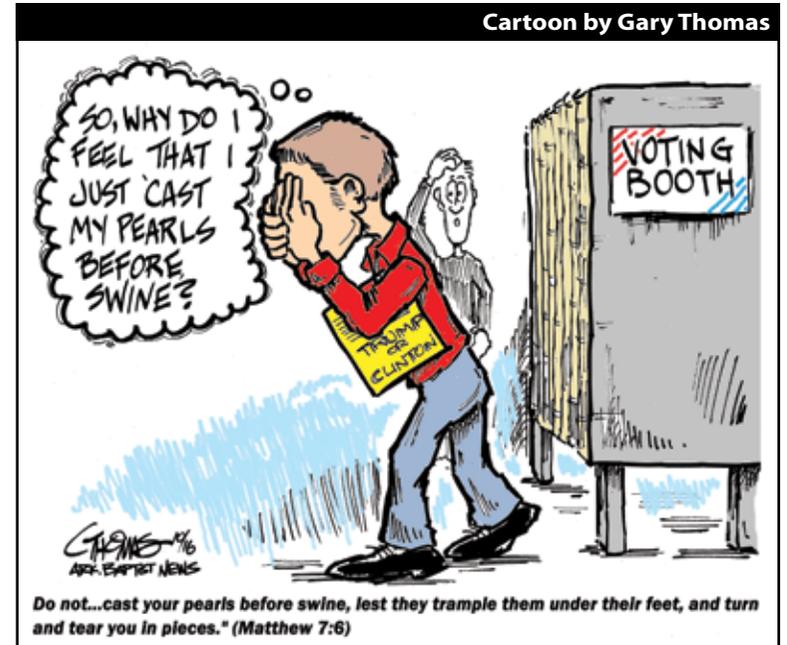
ness and commitment: "For Christ, The Churches and Cooperation."

Today, perhaps more than ever, she stands strong as our

Baptist voice, proclaiming to our state, nation and world that Jesus Christ is Lord!

See **HERE SHE IS** page 6

Cartoon by Gary Thomas



## Key ballot measures to be aware of Nov. 8

Arkansas voters will find seven ballot measures on November's general election ballot. All except Issue 7, which is an initiated act, are proposed constitutional amendments.

Following is a list of the ballot measures along with a brief description of what each will do if approved by the state's voters. Three of the issues which will appear on the ballot have been disallowed by the Arkansas Supreme Court:

**Issue 1** – An amendment concerning the terms, election and eligibility of elected

officials. If adopted by the state's voters, this amendment would allow four-year terms for certain elected county officials and make some other minor changes to election laws.

**Issue 2** – An amendment to allow the governor to retain powers and duties when absent from the state.

**Issue 3** – An amendment concerning job creation, job expansion and economic development. If approved, this amendment primarily will expand the ability for the state and local governments

to issue bonds and use designated tax revenue to enable economic development projects that will employ a large number of Arkansans.

**Issue 4** – On October 13, the Arkansas Supreme Court struck down Issue 4, which would have limited attorney contingency fees and non-economic damages in medical lawsuits. Since ballots have already been printed, it will appear on the ballot. The Court will order the secretary of state not to count or record the votes. Issue 4 is null and void.

**Issue 5** – On October 13, the state Supreme Court struck down Issue 5, which would have established three

casinos to operate in Boone, Washington and Miller Counties. Since ballots have already been printed, it will appear on the ballot. The Court will order the secretary of state not to count or record the votes. Issue 5 is null and void.

**Issue 6** – An amendment to legalize so-called "medical marijuana." Among other things, this amendment will permit both smoked and ingested marijuana. It will not require a doctor's prescription – only a doctor's note – and pharmacies will not dispense the pot. The list of medical conditions is lengthy and includes chronic pain, which cannot be verified.

Anyone who wants to smoke marijuana needs only to claim chronic pain, and permission will be granted. That fact has led many to say that this amendment essentially approves recreational – not just medical – marijuana. The governor and the state's surgeon general, along with numerous other medical professionals in the state and the Arkansas Pharmacists Association, have made strong stands in opposition to this measure and Issue 7.

**Issue 7** – The Arkansas Supreme Court struck down Issue 7, which would have legalized medical marijuana

See **BALLOT** page 6



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Arkansas Baptists since 1901

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## Who were the Nephilim?



### Baptists Ask

Ken Gore

**N**ephilim” is only found three times in the entire Old Testament. While it is difficult to explain this rare biblical term, it is best to examine it in the order that it is found.

The Nephilim (from the Hebrew *naphal*, “to fall”) are first mentioned in the Flood account (Gen. 6:4), immediately after the relationship between the “sons of God” and “daughters of men.” Some conclude that the Nephilim were the “fallen” offspring from this relationship, but they may have already been in existence.

The verse also notes that they were “heroes of old” and “men of renown” (literally, “men of the name”). The narrator, then, described these famed individuals as great, larger-than-life men. While their origin is unsure, unless they were on the Ark, their demise is certain.

Nephilim is used twice more in Numbers 13. When the Israelite spies returned from Canaan, they not only shared its bounty, but they also described its inhabitants. The Israelites portrayed the Anakites as the Nephilim, and they compared themselves to grasshoppers (Num. 13:33).

It’s hard to explain how the Nephilim were the Anakites’ natural ancestors, if they had drowned in the Flood. Perhaps the term Nephilim describes a group of legendary, terrifying warriors, rather than a race of people. It’s no small wonder, then, why the Israelites were fearful of the Anakites. Whether by stature or fame, there was enough fear to prevent the Israelites from taking the land.

The Nephilim, then, were an ancient, profound group of awe-inspiring men who lived before the Flood. When the Israelites described the Anakites as Nephilim, they compared them to the same type of ominous warrior as in Genesis 6. As terrifying as they were, they were no match for the power of God, when Caleb seized their land 45 years later (Josh. 14:12).

*Ken Gore is chairman of the department of Christian studies at Williams Baptist College.*

# For the sake of obedience

**O**ver the past couple of years, God has been shaping my understanding of rest. He has convicted, molded, shaped and directed, helping me to see that what I thought was rest didn’t really fit the bill. He showed me that I had, in all honesty, forgotten how to rest. In the most recent step of obedience, He has shifted my views of Sabbath rest and shown my whole family how we needed to adjust our lives to be more faithful in that area.

For the first few weeks of the shift, things went well. I felt energized and refreshed, and it seemed that my weeks were flowing more smoothly. But, as I sit down to write today, I’m realizing that this week was very, very different.

This week, every single day left at least one to-do incomplete. As I come to the end of the week, the “things-I-have-to-get-done-before-Monday” list is much longer than the hours I have remaining. I honestly have no idea how I will fit everything in. In fact, I’m certain that I won’t, and that means I’ll start Monday behind. I’ll have to figure out how to plow forward while still catching up on the things that will not be left undone.

I’ll start the week tired instead of refreshed.

I confess, I’m tempted to ask what good a Sabbath is if walking away from work means that I’m that much further behind as I start the new week. How does it really help? But, before I can even really formulate the question, the

answer comes to my mind. It’s not about the rest. It’s about the obedience.

Obedience does not always mean everything will work out beautifully. In fact, many times the opposite seems to be true. I think of missionaries whose lives have been cut short because they stepped out in obedience. I think of families who faithfully tithe, yet still find themselves in the middle of financial strain and trouble. I think of men and women who obey God’s direction in ministry, only to be crushed under the weight of the decision.

The results of obedience aren’t always negative. There will be weeks when my obedience to choose a day of rest will mean that God multiplies my time. But, I cannot choose to obey because I expect those results, and I cannot give up when I get the opposite results.

Ultimately, I must remember that the Lord calls for my obedience and then commands that I trust Him with the results, whether they seem marvelous and affirming or discouraging and overwhelming. I must remember that obedience means a right relationship with the Lord, not desirable results.

So today, I choose obedience, and I surrender the to-do list and the results to my faithful Savior. He’s got it covered, and I can trust Him fully.

*Ann Hibbard is a member of East End Baptist Church in East End. Read her blog at [annhibbard.com](http://annhibbard.com).*



### Uncovered Dish

Ann Hibbard

## Public relations reps in churches

**M**ost, if not all, colleges and universities in America have a team of public relations representatives who are charged with finding prospective students, connecting with them, recruiting them and walking with them through the maze of application, financial aid, academic affairs and moving onto campus. These people play a vital, but perhaps not the most powerful, part in student recruitment.

Those same colleges and universities have another very powerful public relations force: current students.

A prospective student can visit the campus, get a guided tour, sit in on a class, eat in the dining hall and meet with a faculty member ... and still be undecided about how he or she feels about the university. Most often, a prospective student needs to be assured that he or she will relationally connect with other students. This happens through conversations with current students – whether planned or spontaneous. Sometimes those conversations are productive and helpful; at other times, they are harmful. For this reason, most universities have a selected group of well-trained students with whom they plan structured social interaction with prospective students.

The church could take a lesson.

Every church needs to have a system for gathering the names of prospects, connecting with them, following up with them and walking with them through the membership process. But, there should also be a secondary process to foster healthy, meaningful interaction between

members and prospects. Prospects need opportunities to socially interact with church members, hear what those members love about their church and be assured that they will be able to develop meaningful relationships.

This is most easily accomplished through Sunday school or small groups. But, more and more prospects or guests are reluctant to visit a Sunday school class or small group without a personal invitation. The most productive invitations are those offered in person.

While there are a few church members who will always take initiative to seek out guests, connect with prospects and have meaningful conversations with them, most will never do so. It is not that these people don’t care; they are just busy doing what

they do. Therefore, an intentional plan must be developed to connect with people and personally invite them to a small group. Then once they attend a small group or Sunday school class, there must be a plan to engage them in conversation and draw them into the group. While in that class, they should also receive an invitation to a class social, lunch or dinner.

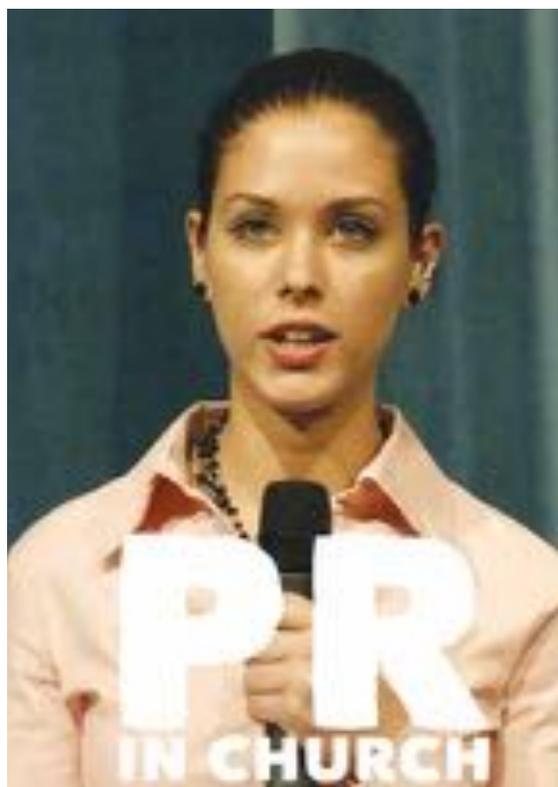
This process does not automatically happen. There must be intentional planning, recruitment of those who will serve as “connectors” and good connector training. For some, this might sound fabricated or not real. Remember that much of the Apostle Paul’s writings to the church were instructions on how to behave, relate, connect, love, train and disciple. Paul dealt with imperfect churches made up of sinful people – people like us.

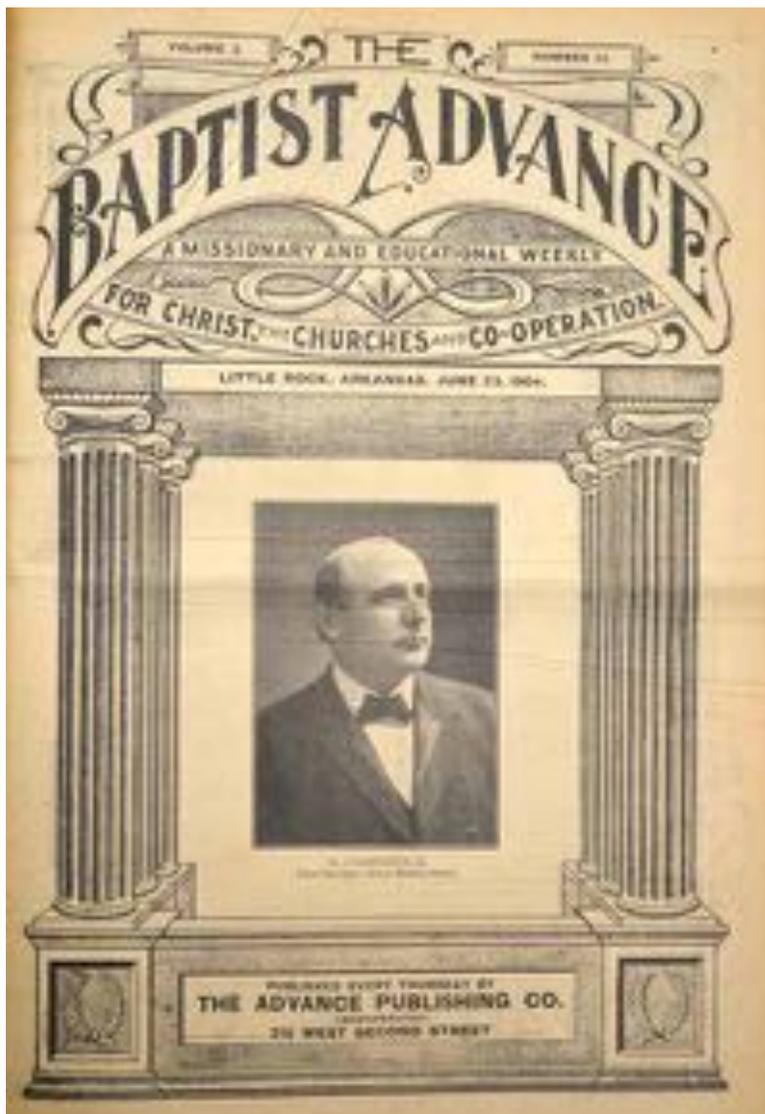
*Eric W. Ramsey is an evangelism and mission strategist and serves as associate pastor of First Baptist Church, Fort Smith.*



### Answering the Call

Eric Ramsey





June 23, 1904, edition of *The Baptist Advance*, now the *Arkansas Baptist News*.

## HERE SHE IS

*continued from page 4*

But – as has been true since her birth – she needs your help.

She requires nurturing, support and encouragement.

– Subscribe and share relevant articles from her print and digital editions.

– “Like” and “Share” her on Facebook.

– “Retweet” and “Like” her on Twitter.

Your encouragement and involvement in her life mean her influence to expand Christ’s kingdom in our diverse culture will grow and

grow with each passing day.

As her current guardians, the staff and board of directors would like to thank you for your support and encouragement during this stage of her life.

Finally, we ask that you not only support the ministry of our “Grand Lady” – which we all know as the *Arkansas Baptist News* – but pray for us as we strive to keep her influence strong, her light bright and her witness strong.

May it be so until that day when the Lord takes us all home. Amen!

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

## BALLOT

*continued from page 4*

and also would have allowed patients to grow their own marijuana if they live more than 20 miles from a dispensary. Since ballots have already been printed, it will appear on the ballot. The Court will order the secretary

of state not to count or record the votes. Issue 7 is null and void.

For more information about these ballot measures visit [arfaith.org](http://arfaith.org) or contact Larry Page, executive director of the Arkansas Faith and Ethics Council, at [llp@arfaith.org](mailto:llp@arfaith.org) or 501-837-1688.

*Larry Page is executive director of the Arkansas Faith and Ethics Council.*

# OBU equips honors students

As a professor of Christian missions and director of the Carl Goodson Honors Program at Ouachita Baptist University, I live in many worlds. Let me tell you about my favorite: the world of honors students – because I get to watch their dreams come true.

In our research-based program, students begin in honors by selecting honors sections of two core courses. They next participate in two innovative interdisciplinary seminars such as Chemistry and Art, The Politics of Food or From Sight to Sound: Adaptations from Fairy Tale to Opera. By their junior year, the students initiate research for their senior thesis, going beyond catalogue offerings and working shoulder-to-shoulder with a professor.

In such a world, flexibility counts. Honors uniquely combines students’ multiple interests and talents

while they earn academic credit. One student combined his major in biology with his love of art for his thesis in medical illustration. Other students have used the thesis as an opportunity to create that novel they had dreamed

of writing. To conduct thesis research, students compete for travel grants, taking them as far

away as South Africa to study the AIDS crisis or Italy to study opera, or as near as South Carolina to research ceramic glazes or New York for theatre workshops.

Although I serve as the honors director, select students serve each other as peer leaders in Alpha Tau, the social component of the program, providing opportunities to make friends across academic disciplines. Together, they sponsor a Black and White Reception to honor seniors and new members, a fall retreat, a freshman field trip, a spring social, student colloquia and the annual

campus-wide Scholars Day. Student perks include an honors lounge, early move-in and their favorite – priority pre-registration. Alpha Tau’s crest sums up the students’ values of academic excellence, undergraduate research and a scholarly community.

The Goodson Honors Program is named in tribute to Carl Goodson, the program’s founding director who served at Ouachita as a professor of religion and vice president for academic affairs until his retirement in 1982.

With guidelines from the National Collegiate Honors Council, wisdom from an enthusiastic faculty council, leadership by dedicated student officers and the hard work of Ouachita faculty and staff, the Carl Goodson Honors Program has flourished, now celebrating more than 300 talented honors students.

*Barbara Pemberton serves as professor of Christian missions and director of the Carl Goodson Honors Program at Ouachita Baptist University.*

### Ouachita Baptist

Barbara Pemberton



# Giving Through MustardSeed

The Foundation is always looking for ways to partner and allow Arkansas Baptists to participate in funding the kingdom through the ministries they love. With that

in mind, we are excited to announce the MustardSeed web application made available through the Baptist Foundation of Oklahoma.

Through this app, each time you make a purchase with your credit or debit card, the purchase amount is rounded up to the nearest dollar. Those few extra cents are then donated to the church or ministry of your choice. By rounding up your purchases through MustardSeed, you can donate your change to further the kingdom and the ministries you love.

The app is called Mus-

tardSeed because it’s about small actions that add up to big changes. A few cents here and there may not seem like

much, but when your gifts join thousands of others, you become part

of something bigger – making a collective impact that moves mountains for God’s glory. Changing the world may seem like a job reserved for visionaries and trailblazers. But the biggest change happens when regular people share a passionate vision. As Jesus told His disciples, with faith the size of a mustard seed, nothing is impossible. “If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you” (Matt. 17:20, NIV).

Using MustardSeed is effortless. Simply link your

credit or debit cards to your MustardSeed account and live life. Buy groceries, get gas and eat out with friends. There’s no need to sign in or swipe your phone each time you make a purchase. Your change is automatically rounded-up and sent to the church or ministry you choose. If finances are tight, you can pause round-ups at any time and resume when you’re ready.

Scripture commands us to serve God with our time, talents and material possessions. MustardSeed is another avenue, in addition to our tithe, to be obedient stewards who regularly, systematically, proportionately and liberally use God’s provision to spread the gospel.

For more information please visit [mustardseedapp.org](http://mustardseedapp.org).

*Bobby Thomas is president of the Arkansas Baptist Foundation.*

### Baptist Foundation

Bobby Thomas



# Speakers to attendees: 'Engage Arkansas with gospel'

LITTLE ROCK – The theme of the 2016 Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC) Annual Meeting was Engage. Messengers to the 163rd meeting Oct. 25-26 heard four messages calling them to lead their churches to engage their community, state, country and the ends of the earth with the gospel. Below is a summary of the messages.

## Sam Roberts

Sam Roberts, pastor, First Baptist Church, Stuttgart, told annual meeting messengers and guests that his prayer and his heart's greatest desire as president of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC) had been based on Isaiah 64:1, asking God to rend the heavens and come down to make His presence known to His people.

"Arkansas Baptists, there are no shortcuts to revival," he said. "Revival never starts out there; revival starts in here (in our hearts)," said Roberts, who called on believers to seek the presence of God.

"Church, we are powerless apart from the power and presence of God," said Roberts who noted that he expects to see an incredible movement of God in Arkansas, in our nation and in our world.

Still, he cautioned, "When the wind of the Spirit moves, there is only one response – surrender. There's no guarantee the wind will blow again."

Roberts called on attendees to "fan the flame" and "not extinguish the fire" of spiritual movement among students today.

"Pastors, the most important way to lead the church is if we individually seek God. Let's not settle for less than what God desires to give," he concluded.

## Chuck Kelley, Jr.

Pointing out the scriptural text describing the Great Commission located at the center of Immanuel Baptist Church, Little Rock's sanctuary, Chuck Kelley, Jr., president of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary in New Orleans, La., told annual meeting attendees that the Great Commission has always been the "focal point" of the Southern Baptist

Convention and the churches that make it up.

Reading from Matthew 28, Kelley said, "In giving that Great Commission, Jesus made it very clear that the imperative command He has for His Church is to make disciples from all the nations of the earth."

Kelley said that the standard to measure our progress in taking the gospel to the ends of the earth is found within the Great Commission. He said the standard that Matthew 28 gives for measuring the fulfillment of the Great Commission is the creation of disciples who are baptized, who have been taught to follow God's commands and who go out and are used by God to develop new disciples.

"I want to give you the satellite view," said Kelley. "It shows you what's coming. I am not going to talk to you about your church. I am going to talk about all of our churches, the whole Southern Baptist Convention."

Kelley displayed a chart highlighting the nearly constant increase in Southern Baptist churches from 1881 to today and the sharp decline in baptisms around the year 2000.

"About the year 2000, something happened. Those lines crossed. The number of churches kept going steadily upward, and the number of baptisms kept going steadily downward," said Kelley. "We are in year 16 of the steepest decline in baptisms in the history of the Southern Baptist Convention – yes, more and more churches but also fewer and fewer people coming to Christ and being baptized in our churches. That gap is absolutely stunning and amazing."

Kelley shared some of his conclusions regarding the results of the chart: 1) "Lostness in North America is having a bigger impact on Southern Baptists than Southern Baptists are having on lostness," 2) "Southern Baptists are becoming a shrinking presence with a diminishing voice in our nation," 3) "Southern Baptists are closer to losing the South than we are to reaching North

America," 4) "To have enough dollars to take the gospel to the ends of the earth, SBC churches have to make disciples of the lost in their communities," and 5) "The life-and-death question for our future is a very simple question. ... 'What can we do to improve the Great Commission health of our churches?'"

Kelley suggested "a way forward" for the Southern Baptist Convention, saying Southern Baptists must "own this problem; live distinctly in the culture; provide and promote strategies, resources and training for evangelism, and seek spiritual awakening."

The only question that "remains on the table," he said, is, "To what wall will we take our grandchildren one day to weep and remember who we once were and what we once did?" referencing the Jews who pray at the temple mount in Jerusalem. "It's not too late Southern Baptists, but midnight is coming."

## J.D. "Sonny" Tucker

"They have to know that you love them. They have to know that you care," J.D. "Sonny" Tucker, executive director of the ABSC, told pastors and messengers during his message Tuesday, Oct. 25.

Tucker, preaching from Matthew 9, said Arkansas Baptists must show compassion today just like Jesus demonstrated when He looked at the crowds, noticing their spiritual condition and afflictions.

While some in the church complain about someone getting their pew, or the temperature of the church not being just right, or the music in the church not being good or students in the church not being dressed appropriately, or those dealing with same-sex attractions, Jesus "moved with love and compassion," said Tucker.

"Arkansas Baptists, do you see the crowd?" he asked. "There are people a rock's throw from our churches dealing with all of these things and distractions ... but Jesus still saw the crowds."

Tucker quoted Matthew 23:37 in making his point: "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who



Sam Roberts, pastor of First Baptist Church, Stuttgart, and president of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, gives the president's message Oct. 25.

kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing."

"I look at the Bible," he told the crowd. "Jesus never turned anyone away. Arkansas Baptists, let's see the crowd, and let's be moved with compassion."

"The harvest is plentiful," Tucker said. "We have the money. We have the programs. We have comfortable seats."

"We have to touch folks through compassion," he said, "(because) Jesus is merciful. Jesus will save."

In closing, Tucker told pastors to look to reach those who aren't necessarily already in their pews.

"You are called to your church, but you are also called to your community," he told the audience, urging them to reach out beyond their church walls.

"Do people have to die and go to hell because we're not comfortable?" Tucker asked.

"Wise leaders work through challenges," Tucker concluded. "(Then) when revival comes, it is a God thing. It is what is supposed to happen (in your church)!"

## Nick Floyd

"It's easy to believe in God when we are not in need of anything supernatural," said Nick Floyd, teaching pastor of Cross Church in northwest



Floyd

Arkansas.

Speaking from 1 Sam. 7, Floyd told those in attendance that there are two key points in the passage: 1) Samuel commands that the people repent and worship God only, and 2) the people of Israel repented and worshiped God only.

"Now, wouldn't it be nice if that happened in your church? You tell the people to do something and they do it," said Floyd. "This happened with Samuel in Israel. ... a perfect spiritual scenario. A prophet of God told the people of God what to do, and the people of God respond to the voice of God."

Floyd described the "Ebenezer" from 1 Sam. 7 as a stone in which the Israelites could always look upon as a reminder of the faithfulness of God "when He rescued the people of God from the Philistines."

Floyd said that pastors should never stray too far from two things: 1) John 3:16 and 2) "a firm belief in the faithfulness of God."

Floyd said that when we forget the faithfulness of God, we invite worry, discouragement and hardness of heart into our life.

"You will never pastor people well with a hardness of heart," said Floyd. "Raising up the Ebenezer in your life has a softening effect."

In closing, Floyd shared three "personal Ebenezers" from his life: anxiety, adoption and Cross Church.

"To now the Lord has helped us and He won't stop now," said Floyd.

# ABSC agency reports highlight God's work in Ark.

## Ouachita Baptist University

Ben Sells, president of Ouachita Baptist University (OBU), reported that OBU has invested in the lives of Arkansas Baptist students for the past 130 years.

Annual meeting attendees heard reports from four OBU panelists: Terry Carter, faculty; Lydia Rogers, staff;



Sells

Emily Long, student, and Clay Cunningham, alumnus. Carter reported that OBU's mission is to train Southern Baptist ministers and laypeople. Rogers reported that 95 percent of OBU students live on campus, and her role is to help students acclimate themselves to life on campus. Long, a senior at OBU, stated that her studies and relationships on the Arkadelphia campus have helped her "learn just what God has called me to do." Cunningham, from the OBU class of 1999, said that he is "confident in what God is doing through the world of higher education" at OBU.

## Arkansas Baptist Foundation

Bobby Thomas, president of the Arkansas Baptist Foundation (ABF), reported that the ABF had taken several proactive steps during the past year to eliminate isolation and duplication, including restructuring of staff and providing free investment oversight for agencies and institutions as well as free consulting for churches regarding capital campaigns. Also, the ABF sold its building and moved, allowing it to make unprecedented gifts of \$447,530 to Arkansas Baptist Cooperative Program ministries from proceeds and savings.

Thomas recognized Charles Bonner, who served for several years on the ABF board, and his wife Genevieve, who have given \$1 million to Camp Siloam as a part of the Feed My Sheep campaign to build a new dining hall at the Arkansas Baptist camp. (See article, "Siloam receives \$1M gift," p. 1.)

Thomas also announced that Arkansas Baptists are now partnering with the Bap-

tist Foundation of Oklahoma (BFOK) in MustardSeed, an app that allows participants to have their credit and debit card charges to be rounded up to the next dollar and given to the ministry of their choice. (See article, "Giving Through MustardSeed," p. 6.)

## Camp Siloam

Jason Wilkie, executive director, Camp Siloam, reported that 352 people had made professions of faith so far this year through their experiences at Camp Siloam. He called on two Arkansas Baptists to share their personal experiences at the camp.

Camp Siloam "is a place where the gospel is preached," said Mike Seabaugh, pastor, Central Baptist Church, Magnolia, emphasizing that the camp gives us "eternal, consistent results for the kingdom of God."

Camp staffer Natalie Ramsey, a member of Barcelona Road Baptist Church, Hot Springs Village, described how her early life had been burdened with challenges, including sexual abuse, a car accident that left her brother paralyzed from the neck down and her parents' divorce.

"I didn't understand why God was allowing these things to happen," she said.

Attending OBU 2012-16, she landed a summer job serving as a staffer at Camp Siloam. There, she met other campers who had experienced similar situations, and she was able to share the hope she has found in Jesus Christ.

## Ark. Faith and Ethics Council

"Winston Churchill said ... 'Democracy is the worst form of government except for all the others,' and I think he was probably right," said Larry Page, executive director of the Arkansas Faith and Ethics Council.

In an attempt to help Arkansas Baptists make educated decisions from a Christian worldview, Page explained the seven ballot issues that come before Arkansas voters Nov. 8. (See article, "Key ballot measures to be aware of Nov. 8," p. 4.)

Page showed a video in which Arkansas's Surgeon General, Greg Bledsoe, argues that marijuana is not medi-

cine, is not healthy and will lead to fully-legal recreational marijuana as it has in other states.

"If I am in pain I could smoke an opium cigarette and I will not be in pain for several hours. But that doesn't make it medicine. What we did with opium is we took that opium and we made morphine and hydrocodone and oxycodone. That is what we need to do with marijuana," said Page.

"I have debated this all over the state. Did you know that there is no legitimate medical organization that endorses smoked and eaten marijuana as medicine? Wouldn't you think that if it was good medicine the FDA or the American Cancer Society or the American Medical Association would endorse it? No one has because it is not medicine," he said.

"We have a dual citizenship as believers. We have a citizenship here and a citizenship in heaven. And there are some important responsibilities in both realms," said Page. "And one of those responsibilities in this realm is to be ... an informed voter."

## ABCHomes

"This is my 22nd report to this body, but this is the first time that I have not brought guests with me so I feel kind of like Kevin in the Christmas movie 'Home Alone,'" said David Perry, executive director of Arkansas Baptist Children's Homes and Family Ministries (ABCHomes).

"The kids will be back next year so count on that. However, for today, I felt led to use this time to share more in-depth about the ministry and about some of the challenges we are facing," said Perry.

Perry described the multiple ministries that make up ABCHomes and how the organization attempts to use them to advance the kingdom of God.

Of those ministries, Perry cited the Arkansas Baptist Home for Children in Monticello, which serves 87 children per year, the Arkansas Baptist Boys Ranch near Harrison, which serves 41 boys per year, and emergency receiving shelters in Judsonia, Paragould and West Fork (The Tommy Jones Memorial Home), which serve 138 children per year.

Perry shared a definition of "Family Care" as Christian ministry that assists single-parent mothers and their children through residential group care, mentoring, financial planning, teaching, counseling and referral to valuable community resources. The focus is on long-term quality-of-life improvements, not on temporary solutions. He highlighted ABCHomes' two family-care facilities in Jonesboro and Little Rock, and a third being developed in northwest Arkansas, which serve a total of 31 single mothers and 60 children per year.



Perry

Perry also highlighted ABCHomes' counseling and foster-care ministries.

ABCHomes' seven counseling locations across the state have provided 8,406 counseling sessions, including 1,500 with ABSC ministers or their families, within the past five years, according to Perry. Connected, ABCHomes' foster-care ministry, has been making a dent in providing care to the more than 5,000 foster children in Arkansas.

Perry listed some things that ABCHomes needs in order to maintain and grow its existing ministries, including new donors and funding to renovate existing facilities and to build new ones, foster-care partners and prayer for all the organization's ministries.

## Williams Baptist College

Attendees at the annual meeting helped Williams Baptist College (WBC) celebrate its 75th anniversary as Tom Jones, WBC president,

reviewed a short history of the college, which was first known as Southern Baptist College. In 1949 the ABSC began financially supporting the college, assuming full ownership of the school in 1968. In 1991 the name of the school was changed to honor its founder, H.E. Williams.



Jones

Jones discussed contempo-

rary WBC highlights, including its national college rankings, growing academic and athletic programs, construction of a new residence hall and the largest single financial gift in its history. The school is receiving approximately \$3 million for capital and program needs from the estate of alumnus Cliff Toney.

The WBC president closed his report by affirming the common purpose of WBC, Ouachita Baptist University and the 35-plus Baptist Collegiate Ministries in Arkansas. "Our primary work ... is our mission as a Convention to fulfill the Great Commission by impacting this next generation with the gospel of Jesus Christ," he said.

Two WBC alumni, one current student and one parent of a current WBC student shared with attendees how meaningful the school had been in their academic and spiritual development. ABSC executive staff presented Jones with a plaque in recognition of the WBC 75th anniversary and invited attendees to an anniversary reception.

## Baptist Memorial Healthcare

Jason Little, president and CEO of Baptist Memorial Healthcare, Memphis, shared with attendees that although the institution has grown since its start in 1912, its three-fold mission - healing, preaching and teaching - has not changed. In healing, Baptist Memorial Healthcare has recently opened a new children's hospital. In preaching, the institution shares the gospel as it provides care to a large homeless population through a mobile van, reaching about 3,500 people annually. In teaching, the institution trains healthcare professionals through the Baptist College of Health Sciences, which includes a new residency program in downtown Memphis.

Over the past two-and-a-half years, Baptist Memorial Healthcare, Memphis, opened a new \$400 million facility in Jonesboro with 130 physicians. early 2018. Nine of the 27 people on the institutions board of directors are from Arkansas.

## Arkansas Baptist News

See the *Arkansas Baptist News* report on page 4.

# PC speakers call pastors to lead churches to 'Engage'

LITTLE ROCK – Pastors and church staff from across Arkansas were inspired and convicted during the 2016 Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC) Pastors' Conference Oct. 24 at Immanuel Baptist Church in Little Rock. Beginning with a time of directed prayer, attendees heard messages addressing the conference theme Engage.

Newly elected officers for the 2017 ABSC Pastor's Conference are Greg Sykes, pastor of First Baptist Church, Russellville, president; Wyman Richardson, pastor of Central Baptist Church, North Little Rock, vice president, and James Guthrie, pastor of First Baptist Church, Sparkman, secretary-treasurer.

## Tom Elliff

Tom Elliff, former president of the International Mission Board, spoke on the book of Jonah, highlighting what he called "the larger theme" of the book – God's sacrificial love for lost people – and the sub-theme of the book – God's concern for how believers care for lost people – by giving a summary title to each of Jonah's 4 chapters.

"If you can actually measure on a scale of lostness ... the most lost people on the face of the earth in those days would have been the Ninevites. When you think of Nineveh, think ISIS," said Elliff.



Elliff

"Even ISIS has not, as best we can tell, come up with a more deviant way and perverse way of inflicting pain and

suffering on people, not more than the Ninevites."

"Nineveh was a big city ... the largest city on the earth at that time. It was the capital of the Assyrian Empire," said Elliff. "Nineveh is Mosul, Iraq. ... Do you remember what was the first thing that ISIS did when it came into Mosul? They went directly to the traditional tomb of Jonah and destroyed it."

Elliff expressed the major and minor themes of Jonah by titling each chapter with a summary of its key point: 1) God cares whether you care for

lost people, 2) God cares when you care, 3) God cares where you care and 4) God cares why I care.

Ending with a poem based on one from the book "World Missions: Total War" by L.E. Maxwell, Elliff said, "He (God) is after your heart. It's His, and He cares."

## Willie Jacobs

Preaching from 2 Corinthians 5, Willie Jacobs, member of the ABSC church planting team, explained the reconciliation allowed to believers through Christ and urged each minister in attendance to "commit and engage" in the "ministry of reconciliation" in their community and within their churches.

"If we are going to talk about revival and we are going to talk about God doing something great in Arkansas, there has to not only be a heart transplant but there has got to be a reorganization of our thinking process. We cannot be caught up in ourselves; we have to go where God wants us to go and do what God wants us to do," said Jacobs. "We don't need to rectify what God has already rectified. ... What we need to do is join God in what He is doing and trust Him by faith even when we are in Nineveh."

Referencing the TV sitcom "The Addams Family," Jacobs said, "We all come from the Adam's family. We all came from the Adam's family, and there wasn't nothing funny about it. We are all born in sin and shaped in inequity. We were apart from God. So if we were all born in the Adam's family and it was God that worked in our lives in order to bring us into His kingdom, we ought not make excuses about what God wants us to do."

"As brother George Higgins used to say, 'It doesn't matter how high you jump when you're at church. It's how you walk when you land outside,'" said Jacobs. "I know that it's challenging for many pastors who have congregations who are not there yet, who still struggle with what it means to

really engage the culture. And I'm not just talking about color culture. I'm talking about the culture in which you live day in and day out."

"We can't deal with racial issues until we deal with spiritual reconciliation," said Jacobs. "When we are reconciled to Christ, it will change our way of thinking about what God said."

"It's not a black church; it's not a white church; it's not a Chinese church ... it is God's Church, and the gospel is good for everybody," said Jacobs.

"The last time I checked when I cut myself, I bleed red, and when you cut yourself, you bleed red, which means that God has created all of us as His children, as one."

## Larry Page

Larry Page, executive director of the Arkansas Faith and Ethics Council, briefly addressed conference attendees regarding legal issues of concern to pastors and churches.

"I decided that we should emphasize the 800-pound gorilla and the five-ton elephant that are sitting in our living rooms. And what are those? Well, it's the threats to our religious liberties and the SOGI (Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity) agenda," said Page.

"It is appropriate to talk about those in tandem because the SOGI agenda is being used, to a large extent, as a stalking horse to strip us of our religious liberties," said Page. "I'm not here to alarm anyone. I'm not here to scare anyone. Don't leave here and say, 'Larry Page was impersonating Chicken Little and saying the sky is falling.' But I've watched these issues grow, and I see the developments over time in the various parts of our nation and culture."



Page

country's history and do all they can, within legal measure,

to fight for them.

"The more strictures there are on our religious liberties, the fewer opportunities we have to share the gospel out there. We want to do it out there, not just in here," said Page.

## Mark Dance

Former Arkansas pastor, Mark Dance, who now serves as director of LifeWay pastors, asked those in attendance, "What is the most important command in Scripture?"

"God had to get my attention 10 years ago in a cabin in Jasper, Arkansas," said Dance. "I spent a week with the Lord just seeking Him. ... I opened the Word and was just reading the gospels. I can't honestly tell you if it was Matthew, Mark or Luke, but I saw the great commandment with fresh eyes."



Dance

"There is nothing more important in the whole Bible. What's the greatest (commandment)? That's, 'Love God.' Everybody here knows that. The second is, 'Love your neighbor as yourself,'" said Dance. "I believe that every pastor here wants to be a Great Commission pastor. But you will not be a Great Commission pastor, at least a healthy one, unless you are also a great commandment pastor."

Dance said that many pastors focus so strongly on the Great Commission that they lose sight of the importance of actually loving and shepherding their congregation.

"A great commandment pastor will always be a Great Commission pastor, but a Great Commission pastor will not always be a great commandment pastor," said Dance. "We're not talking, for the next few minutes, about growing your church. We are talking about growing you, and we are going to talk about being healthy enough to finish."

Dance said that while statistics are often exaggerated, many pastors find themselves becoming burned out and disillusioned as leaders of their churches. One major reason for this, Dance said, is that pastors and church staff members often find it incredibly difficult to voice their struggles or

needs to their church for fear of being seen as weak or incapable of leading well.

Dance said that pastors must keep their relationship priorities straight: 1) Jesus, 2) spouse, 3) children/family and 4) friends.

"There is a secret that everyone already knows in this room but our church members don't ~ that we are not always on fire for God," said Dance. "Guess what, you are not always going to be growing. I don't mean that to discourage you, but when Paul told Timothy to preach the Word in season and out of season, it was a pastoral epistle talking about us."

Dance shared about his personal experience with clinical depression while serving as pastor of Second Baptist Church, Conway.

"God showed me something about the beautiful body of Christ ~ that even though God sent me there to minister to them, I am part of a family and that sometimes they need to minister to me," said Dance. "Don't hesitate to ask for help because your people will help you."

Citing the recent firing of South Carolina Baptist pastor Perry Noble as an example of how isolation and lack of accountability can have disastrous consequences for church leaders, Dance said pastors must keep their relationships with God and other people strong if they are going to lead their congregations well.

## John Meador

John Meador, pastor of First Baptist Church, Euless, Texas, described the courage of his daughter, a Euless police officer, when she responded to a shooting in the city in March.

Meador said his daughter did not tell him she was involved in the firefight until it was over. He asked her how she had the courage to walk into the line of fire, and she told him that: 1) her commander was equipped, 2) her comrades needed her and 3) her community was at risk.

"We live in a world that is very much like that today," said Meador. "We live in a world that is very much out of control. We live in a world that

## PASTORS

continued from page 9

very desperately needs some commanders and comrades to care about the community. And if you and I don't do it, I don't believe anyone will."

Meador said 2 Timothy 4 is all about pastors feeding and leading their flocks. He said the passage provides pastors instruction on how to equip their churches to engage their communities with the gospel of Christ.

"We are going to be dealing with all kinds of opposition to the gospel wherever we are, Arkansas and Texas ... or wherever we are in the world," said Meador.

"In America we are in a disastrous situation. ... We have gone as far away from moral and good as we can go. ... We are living in a gospel-less culture," he said.

Meador said that "godlessness reflects gospel-lessness" and "where there is a gospel saturation in the culture, there is a God consciousness in the culture."

"We must raise up an army of gospel sharers and one of

the best ways ... is to equip your church to engage the culture with the gospel," said Meador.

"Ninety-five percent who claim to be believers have never shared their faith."

Meador said that four years ago he began allocating "go" time to get outside the walls of his church and engage his community. He said that it is incredibly important for pastors to lead their congregations by example in regards to personal evangelism and reaching their neighbors with the gospel.

"The gospel has enough power to change the world and I want to be part of that. And I want my church to be part of that," said Meador.

"Let me challenge you to get a little closer to your community."

### Ronnie Floyd

Ronnie Floyd, pastor of Cross Church in northwest Arkansas and former president of the Southern Baptist Convention, began his time with his fellow Arkansas Baptist pastors with a question: "Who needs a spiritual breakthrough in your life and ministry today?"

Using Mark 9:14-29 as his scriptural focus, Floyd provided insight into answering that question. First, he called on pastors to "identify your need," pointing out that "the problem is not always someone else."

Second, Floyd said to pastors to "admit your limitations." He said that there is a fierce battle between God and us "when we try to do it all in our own power." He called on pastors to admit their weaknesses because "giving your needs to God does not lead to defeat; it leads to victory."

Third, Floyd called on pastors to "prepare for battle," citing 1 Peter 4:7, and saying "We have been called to walk with God seriously."

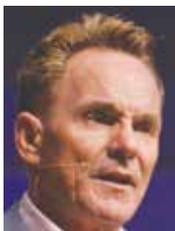
Fourth, Floyd advised pastors to "call out to the Lord in prayer and fasting." He explained that "there are seasons in your life when you need to retreat and withdraw and go to God."

"Prayer and fasting ignite your spirit and call into order your mind, will, emotion and body," which is "when God has you ready for breakthroughs."

Story compiled with reports by Arkansas Baptist News staff.



Meador



Floyd

## Ark. Baptists approve 8 resolutions

LITTLE ROCK – Arkansas Baptist messengers approved eight resolutions at the 2016 annual meeting of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC). For full text of the resolutions, go to arkansasbaptist.org. Below is a summary of the eight resolutions.

### NO. 1: APPRECIATION

Messengers expressed appreciation to the ABSC president and executive director, staff and members of Immanuel Baptist Church, Little Rock, and the annual meeting program committee for their "diligent and sacrificial service in the successful preparation and guidance of the 163rd session" of the ABSC.

### NO. 2: ON CHRISTIAN CITIZENSHIP AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION

Messengers encouraged "all believers to engage the culture by being informed and proactive citizens by voting in all elections, by praying for all those in authority and positions of influence, and by participating appropriately in civic matters."

### NO. 3: ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Messengers denounced human trafficking, which affects an estimated 37 million victims worldwide and more than 20,000 in the U.S. The resolution urged Arkansas Baptists to pray for victims of

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human trafficking, become informed about human trafficking, undergird ministries and organizations combatting it, uphold professionals working to eliminate it and call on governments to end it and punish those who prey upon others.

#### NO. 4: ON GENDER DYSPHORIA

Messengers affirmed God's creation of two distinctive and complementary sexes and recognizing gender dysphoria as "the latest front for the advancement of the Sexual Orientation/Gender Identity agenda" as well as a recognized mental disorder. The resolution called on Christians to affirm God's good creation, extend love and compassion to those who are experienc-

ing gender confusion, agree that all need to trust Christ, recognize that all people – even those with gender identity problems – are image-bearers of Christ, oppose governmental efforts to validate transgender identity and proclaim scriptural teaching about God's design for "male and female persons created in His Image and for His glory."

#### NO. 5: ON "MEDICAL" MARIJUANA

Messengers acknowledged that Arkansas voters will vote in November's general election on two ballot issues that seek to legalize so-called "medical" marijuana and that "bona fide health organizations" do not endorse the smoking or eating of marijuana "because

they do not consider it real medicine." The resolution called on Christians to affirm compassionate care for those suffering with painful and debilitating medical conditions, which does not include the use of marijuana, to vote against Issues 6 and 7 and to advocate for continued "rigorous research in its never ending quest to develop safer and more effective medications with the primary goal of delivering the most compassionate health care possible."

#### NO. 6: ON RELIGIOUS LIBERTY IN THE U.S.

Messengers affirmed that the first amendment to the U.S. Constitution recognizes that our "God-given religious freedom is a fundamental and inviolable human right" and highlighting many instances in the U.S. where these religious liberty rights are under assault. The resolution called on Christians to express gratitude for God-given religious freedom, call on every branch of government to address claims of first-amendment violations, defend the rights of those who are facing discrimination as well as the rights of every American to worship God freely and to stand with and pray for those who are persecuted for their faith.

#### NO. 7: ON WHY CHRISTIANS SHOULD LEAD ON RACIAL RECONCILIATION

Messengers recognized that race relations are worsening in our country and that Christians are "qualified" and called "to bring diverse groups together." The resolution called for Christians to recommit ourselves to "loving and equipping people of all races and ethnicities," demonstrate a heart for racial reconciliation, seek racial reconciliation personally and denounce racial discrimination.

#### NO. 8: ON PRAYER SUP-

#### PORT AND APPRECIATION FOR MISSIONARIES VOLUNTARILY RETIRING

Messengers acknowledged that the International Mission Board reduced its missionary force by about 20 percent in 2015 "because of financial reasons." The resolution called on Christians to affirm those who have returned to the U.S. from their international places of service, strengthen their financial support for missions, encourage returning missionaries to share their stories and pray for these missionaries who have returned as well as missionaries who remain on the field.

## ENGAGE

*continued from page one*

church planting, impact stories from work funded through the Dixie Jackson Arkansas Missions Offering and other work around the state such as one-day mission trips.

There were several times of focused prayer throughout the meeting led by Don Moore, retired ABSC executive director; Bill Elliff of the Summit Church, North Little Rock, and Manley Beasley, Jr. of Hot Springs Baptist Church.

Worship times during the meeting were led by Scott Quimby of First Baptist Church, Stuttgart; the worship team from First Baptist Church, Sherwood, and Larry Grayson of the ABSC Executive Board staff. In addition, messengers and guests enjoyed performances by Master Singers and the Williams Singers from Williams Baptist College.

#### Board report, budget

Greg Sykes, ABSC Executive Board president and senior pastor of First Baptist Church, Russellville, gave the Executive Board report Oct. 25.

The Executive Board's 2017 Cooperative Program budget of \$21 million, team goals, recommendations to amend the articles of incorporation and the bylaws for Arkansas Baptist Foundation and a recommendation concerning the 2018-2022 Cooperative Program unified budget formula were all approved by messengers. (For details, see pp. 1, 13-14 in the Aug. 22 edition of the *Arkansas Baptist News*).

#### Panel discussion

Roberts moderated a panel

discussion Oct. 25 during the afternoon session that included Steven Bell, pastor of Otter Creek Community Church in Little Rock; Brad Lewter, pastor of Grand Avenue Baptist Church, Fort Smith; McCalum; Jason Miller, associate pastor at Geyer Springs First Baptist Church, Little Rock; Chanson Newborn, pastor of Fellowship Community Church, Forrest City, and Jason Tallent, pastor of First Baptist Church, Cabot.

The panel discussed strategies that they have used in order to lead their churches to engage their community with the gospel.

#### Miscellaneous

– The convention's Nominating Committee report was approved with no challenges and no discussion. The committee nominates people to serve on boards of ABSC entities and institutions. (For a list of nominees, see p. 11 in the Aug. 22 edition of the ABN.)

– A block party was held on the grounds of Immanuel Baptist Church to demonstrate for church leaders how to hold block parties in their own churches.

– During a brief Executive Board meeting Tuesday afternoon, Rob Davis, pastor of First Baptist Church, Harrison, was elected president of the board and Dale Walker, pastor of Concord Baptist Church, Van Buren, was elected vice president.

The 2017 annual meeting of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention will be held Nov. 7-8 at First Baptist Church, Russellville.

For additional coverage of the annual meeting, visit the ABN Facebook page or arkansasbaptist.org.

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# South Highland Baptist celebrates 100 years

LITTLE ROCK – South Highland Baptist Church, Little Rock, celebrated its 100th anniversary Oct. 9.

More than 200 attended the celebration with the theme, The Greatest of These Is Love.

“It was a wonderful Sunday as God moved and blessed,” said Bill McCall, pastor of

South Highland since 2012.

“There was a sweet atmosphere of love and fellowship with people reuniting with old friends and making new friends as we all worshiped together. And God gets all the glory!” said McCall.

A video highlighting the formation and history of the

church and its longtime emphasis on supporting missions, including how it started a mission church that would one day become Geyer Springs First Baptist Church in Little Rock, was shown during the service.

Marcus Brown, team member with the Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC) evangelism and church growth team, presented the church with a 100th anniversary certificate.



Cooper

“It was great to see so many people who have been impacted by the ministry of SHBC,” said Brown.

A number of former pastors joined McCall at the pulpit for the presentation.

Randy Maxwell, who served

as pastor from 1992-96, shared a word of congratulations with members and guests.

The South Highland Thirtyniners Choir, featuring organist Lou Alley and pianist Shirley Sims, led special music during the service.

Don Cooper was guest speaker during the service. Cooper has served in various capacities at the church since the 1970s. He spoke on The Family of God.

Connie McCall, wife of the pastor, sang “The Greatest of These Is Love,” and Bill McCall called the congregation to close the service by singing the hymn, “The Family of God.”

The anniversary service was followed by banquet in the fellowship hall.

## Obituaries

**Marvin Black**, age 85, of Black Springs, died Oct. 11.



A retired logger and Baptist minister, Black surrendered to the ministry in 1964.

Black served as pastor of Murphy Baptist Church in Black Springs for 37 years.

He also served as pastor of Caddo Gap Baptist Church in Caddo Gap and Big Fork Baptist Church in Mena.

Black was preceded in death by his wife of 67 years, Delois Brewer Black.

He was also preceded in death by a son, a grandson, his parents, three brothers and three sisters.

He is survived by two daughters, two sons, 10 grandchildren, 14 great-grandchildren,

four great-great-grandchildren, three brothers and a sister.

Services were held Oct. 17 at Murphy Baptist Church in Black Springs.

Burial was at Murphy Baptist Church Cemetery in Black Springs.

**David W. “Dave” Jackson**, 54, of Jonesboro, died Oct. 20, in Memphis, Tenn.

Jackson was serving as associate pastor and worship leader at Central Community Church in Harrisburg.

He graduated from Williams Baptist College in 1983 and later attended Arkansas State University.

Jackson served in the ministry for 33 years.

He is survived by his parents, his wife of 31 years, Chris, a son and two sisters.

Funeral services were held Oct. 22 at Central Community Church.

Burial was in Jonesboro Memorial Park in Jonesboro.

## Church life

**Ozark Baptist Church, Ozark**, will celebrate its 150th anniversary at 10:30 a.m., Nov. 6.

Former pastor Ted Darling will be preaching. Former music director, Sam Wakefield, will be leading the congregational singing, and David Hogan, along with other former music directors, will pres-

ent the special music.

Pastors, music, youth, children’s leaders and church secretaries who previously served at the church are invited to attend as honored guests.

For more information, call the church office at 479-667-3858.

**Williams Baptist College** will host its annual homecoming Saturday, Nov. 5. The college is celebrating its 75th year.

# Classifieds

## PASTOR

FBC Clarendon, AR, is seeking a **full-time pastor**. Send resumes to FBC Search Committee, PO Box 324, Clarendon, AR 72029.

FBC, Sheridan, is seeking a **full-time senior pastor**. Send resumes to FBC Pastor Search, 1201 S. Rock, Sheridan, AR 72150 or fbcsheridanpastorsearch@gmail.com by 12-31-16.

Small church needs **full-time pastor** who uses KJV. Has parsonage. Send resume to: Rickey Wilkes, Friendship Baptist Church, 3712 Hwy. 1 S., Marianna, AR 72360.

Shilo Baptist Church (SBC), Rover, Mo., 17 miles east of West Plains, seeking **bi-vocational pastor**. Worship attendance about 70, median age about 35. Send resumes to: Lyndell Huddleston, HC 61, West Plains, MO 65775.

Smithville Baptist Church seeking either **bi-vocational or full-time pas-**

**tor**. Please send resume to P.O. Box 37, Smithville, AR 72466.

Accepting application **bi-vocational pastor**. Resumes to Calvary Baptist Church, P.O. Box 532 Dardanelle, AR. 72834. Attention: Pastor Search Committee.

FBC, Vandervoort, AR, in Ouachita Baptist Assoc. is accepting resumes for **full-time pastor**. Email resume to beckie.apple@tyson.com.

First Southern Baptist Church, Bearden, AR, is seeking a **full-time/bi-vocational pastor**. Send letter/resume to P.O. Box 449, Bearden, AR 71720, or email fsbc@fsbcbearden.com. ATTN: Pastor Search Committee.

FBC Bellefonte is searching for a **bi-vocational pastor**. We are a fundamental, conservative, traditional worship rural church in the Ozarks. Send resume to jpslinger@icloud.com.

First Baptist Church, Gillham, is seeking a **full-time pastor**. Please send resumes to Pastor Search Committee, c/o Vona McKinley, 332 Pendergrass Road,

Horatio, AR 71842.

## OTHER STAFF POSITIONS

Memorial Heights Baptist Church, Claremore, OK, is seeking the man called by God to love, teach, and outreach as **full-time youth minister**. Send resumes to memorialheights@sbcglobal.net.

Crossgate Church of Hot Springs, Arkansas, is prayerfully seeking a person to fill the position of **executive pastor**. To obtain more information about this position please visit our church website @ www.crossgate.org, click on the About Us link and then Employment Opportunities. For questions or to send resumes electronically, please email us at xpastor@crossgate.org. Resumes may also be mailed to XPastor Search, Crossgate Church, 3100 East Grand Ave, Hot Springs, Arkansas 71901.

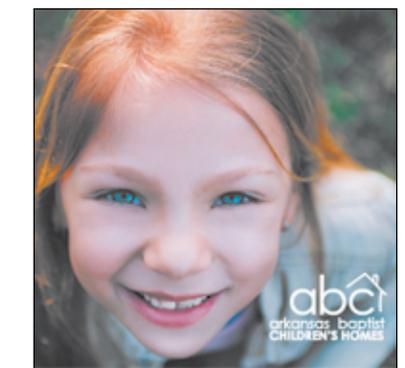
Sheridan First Baptist Church is seeking a **part-time interim worship/choir**

**leader** (Sunday morning service & Wednesday pm practice). Please send resume: 1201 South Rock Street, Sheridan, AR 72150 email fbcsheridan@windstream.net.

Church Position: Hillcrest Baptist Church, Jasper, TX, is seeking a **full-time associate pastor/youth minister/missions minister**. Send resumes to: Bro. David Nugent, Hillcrest Baptist Church, 3196 U.S. Hwy. 190W, Jasper, TX 75951, or email rhondahsm02@yahoo.com. For questions or information, call Bro. David Nugent at 409-384-3371.

Union Baptist Church, El Dorado, is prayerfully seeking a **bi-vocational music minister**. Please send resume and DVD/link to Jonathan Morris, 144 Crain City Rd, El Dorado, AR 71730, or email jmorris.ubc@gmail.com.

Beebe First Baptist Church is accepting resumes for a **full-time minister of music and education**. Please send resume to PO Box 67 Beebe, AR 72012 or email



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Contact: Derek Brown at (501) 455-8554 or dbrown@abchomes.org. This relief houseparent position includes salary, medical and life insurance and paid leave.



Read more news and features on our new website at [arkansasbaptist.org](http://arkansasbaptist.org)

## MISCELLANEOUS

WANTED: **Bibles and hymnals** Prussian Blue 1991. Emmanuel Baptist, 870-838-5085.

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# Ministers' wives gather, fellowship Oct. 24 at IBCLR

LITTLE ROCK – About 85 women gathered for the Ministers' Wives Conference and luncheon at Immanuel Baptist Church, Little Rock, Oct. 24, prior to the Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC) annual meeting.

The purpose of the annual event is "to bring ministers' wives from all size churches and backgrounds together for encouragement, uplifting and equipping," said Vickie Lee, First Baptist Church, Sherwood, and a member of the leadership team that plans the conference and luncheon.

The theme of this year's event was Seen. "It's vital for ministers' wives to be reminded that we are not just seen by church members looking through the walls of our glass houses. We are also seen by a loving Father and the precious friends He puts in our lives for our encouragement and support," said Ann Hibbard, East

End Baptist Church, Hensley, and also a leadership team member.

Speakers for the event were Janet Dance, wife of Mark Dance, director of LifeWay pastors; and Andrea Lennon, ABSC women's ministry specialist.

Worship was led by Taylor and Jennifer Keenan from Fort Smith, as well as Tracey Hirschy, First Baptist Church, Little Rock.

Dance and Lennon became close friends when Dance's husband served as pastor of Second Baptist Church, Conway, before he accepted the position with LifeWay about two years ago. The two women discussed the journey of their friendship, the importance of ministers' wives having at least one special friend, and several dangers of loneliness among ministers' wives.

"Loneliness can lead to isolation, which is the opposite of ministry," said Lennon.

The two women also discussed cautions for ministers' wives to consider as they develop friendships, how much is too much to share with friends

and practical steps on how to find a friend.

In addition to Hibbard and Lee, other leadership team members were: Angie Millard,

Pearcey Baptist Church, Pearcey; Sherrill Moffett, First Baptist Church, Pocahontas, and Shiela Stadler, Fianna Hills Baptist Church, Fort Smith.

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1 THESSALONIANS 2:8

*Sharing life, sharing the Gospel, wherever you go.*

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**Thank you Arkansas Baptists for giving to the Dixie Jackson Arkansas Missions Offering. God is at work in our state and it is our privilege to partner together to live the Gospel in the coming year. Be sure to check back often at [absc.org/dixiejackson](http://absc.org/dixiejackson) to discover ways you can get involved.**

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# Faith & Culture

*"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind..."*

Romans 12:2 (ESV)

## 2016 presidential election exposes Evangelical divides

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – Americans with evangelical beliefs share a great deal in common. They trust in Jesus alone, evangelize their neighbors, and believe the Bible is the final authority in their lives.

But when it comes to voting, race and political affiliation still divide evangelicals, according to a survey from Nashville-based LifeWay Research taken before the second presidential debate.

Overall, fewer than half (45 percent) of those with evangelical beliefs who plan to vote support Donald Trump, according to the survey. A third (31 percent) say they will vote for Hillary Clinton. Fifteen percent are undecided. One in 10 (9 percent) support a third-party candidate.

White Americans with evangelical beliefs favor Trump (65 percent) over Clinton (10 percent). Sixteen percent are undecided. Eight percent plan to vote for Gary Johnson.

African-Americans, Hispanic Americans, and Asian-Americans with evangelical beliefs support Clinton (62 percent) over Trump (15 percent). Thirteen percent are undecided. Seven percent support Gary Johnson.

LifeWay Research also found that party affiliation is a much stronger predictor of voting preferences than faith. Three-quarters of Republicans with evangelical beliefs plan to vote for Trump. Though a smaller sample, 75 percent of Democrats with evangelical beliefs plan to vote for Clinton.

Scott McConnell, executive director of LifeWay Research, said the divides among evangelicals will remain long after the election is over.

"This group of Christians share the same core beliefs – but they don't vote the same way," said McConnell. "There

are significant cultural and political divides among evangelicals that won't easily go away."

### Politics unify more than faith

The representative online survey asked 1,000 Americans four questions about core evangelical beliefs on the Bible, the crucifixion of Jesus, salvation and evangelism. Those who strongly agreed with all four (17 percent) qualified as having evangelical beliefs.

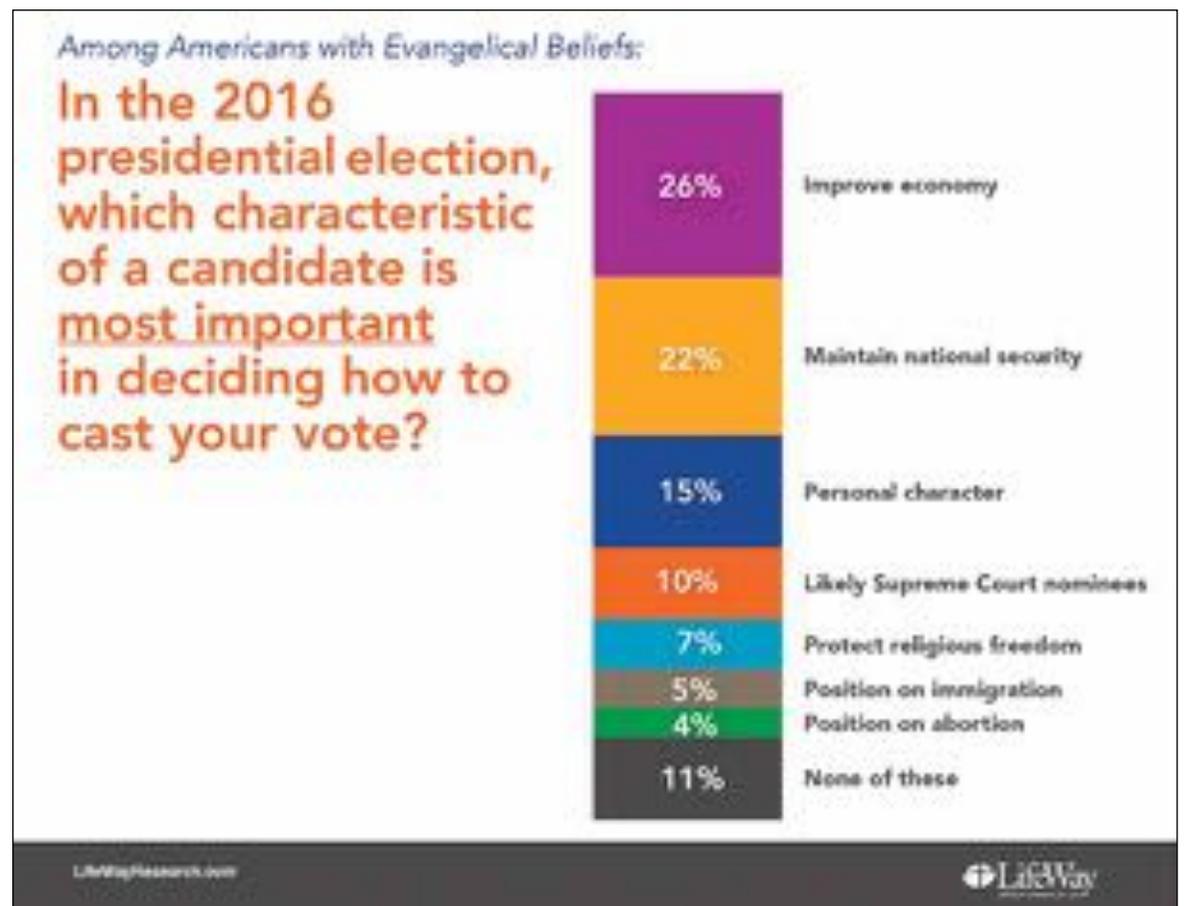
The idea is to define evangelicals by belief rather than self-identified religious affiliation, said McConnell.

"The evangelical label has picked up political and social overtones that mask any patterns that are actually tied to evangelical religious beliefs," he said.

For example, many political surveys look at only self-identified white evangelicals, who have tended to support Republican presidential candidates, including Trump. The pool of Americans with evangelical beliefs, however, is more diverse. Four in 10 Americans with evangelical beliefs are African-American, Hispanic American, Asian-American or other ethnic minority. Six in 10 are white. Those with evangelical beliefs also have more diverse political views, according to

LifeWay Research.

As part of the survey, researchers looked at how people with evangelical beliefs and churchgoers see the issues at play in the 2016 election. Topics like personal character, abortion and religious liberty



– often identified as key evangelical issues – matter less in this election. Other pragmatic concerns – like the economy and national security – are more influential.

For Americans with evangelical beliefs, a candidate's ability to improve the economy matters most (26 percent), followed by national security (22 percent) and personal character (15 percent). Few value Supreme Court nominees (10 percent), religious freedom (7 percent), immigration (5 percent) or abortion (4 percent).

For self-identified Christians who go to church at least once a month, the economy (30 percent), national security (23 percent) and personal character (15 percent) top their concerns. Few prioritize Supreme Court nominees (10 percent),

religious freedom (6 percent), immigration (4 percent) or abortion (3 percent).

Overall, the economy (30 percent) is the top concern for Americans regardless of religious affiliation. National security (17 percent) and personal character (17 percent) also are significant. Supreme Court nominees (10 percent), immigration (5 percent), religious freedom (2 percent) and abortion (1 percent) are less important.

For churchgoers and those with evangelical beliefs, their pocketbook and personal safety are paramount, said McConnell. "Moral issues aren't a priority for many of them."

### Religion plays a role

Still, religion does seem to affect voting patterns.

Self-identified Christians who go to church at least once a month favor Trump (41 percent). A third (34 percent) plan to vote for Clinton. Eighteen percent are undecided. Six percent support a third party candidate.

Americans who skip church are more likely to support

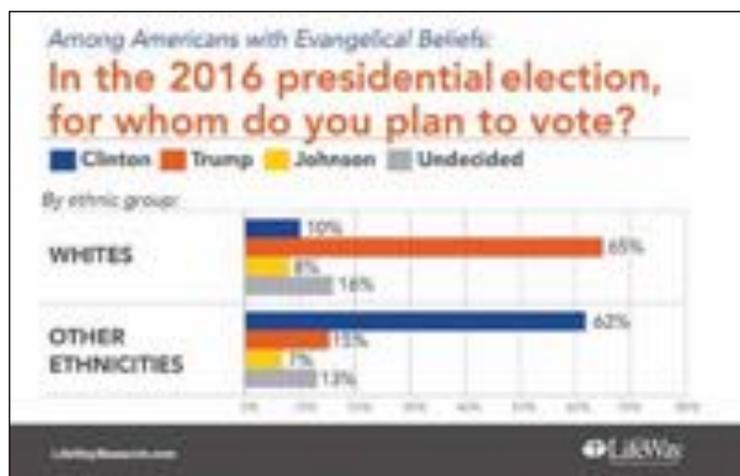
Clinton (46 percent). A third (31 percent) plan to vote for Trump. Fifteen percent are undecided. Eight percent favor a third-party candidate.

Those without evangelical beliefs also favor Clinton (45 percent). Thirty-two percent plan to vote for Trump. Sixteen percent are undecided. Eight percent plan to vote for a third-party candidate.

A previous LifeWay Research poll of Protestant pastors found that most clergy don't expect Christians to vote the same way. Two-thirds (65 percent) disagree with the statement, "Christians who truly vote their conscience will vote for the same candidate." Less than a third (29 percent) agree. Six percent are not sure.

McConnell said that neither major party in the United States has a monopoly on biblical values. So it's no surprise, he said, that evangelicals who value the Bible will vote differently.

"Christianity includes people from different political parties," he said. "Sometimes I think evangelicals forget that."



NOVEMBER 13, 2016

2 Peter 1:12 (NASB) always makes me chuckle a bit. "Therefore, I will always be ready to remind you of these things, even though you already know them, and have been established in the truth which is present with you."

I chuckle, because I often follow Peter's example when I teach Sunday school, discipleship and mentoring classes. I just phrase it a little differently, usually starting with, "You're probably going to get tired of me saying this," or, "I know you've heard me say this before, but I'm going to keep saying it until it's firmly entrenched in your minds."

So, what was the reminder Peter was giving to his readers? He was bringing them back to what they originally learned. In the midst of a plethora of voices trying to pull at them and distract them, Peter reminded them that he was an eyewitness to the glory of Jesus Christ. With his own ears, he heard the voice of God the Father confirming His Son. He was one of the first to receive the Holy Spirit

and proclaim the truth. He was reminding them that what he'd taught them in the beginning was still trustworthy, no matter what the other voices were saying.

And what do I remind the young ladies I'm blessed to encourage and teach? I remind them that they have the same firsthand information that the early church received.

They hold the same Scriptures early believers held. They, too, learn from Peter and Paul and John because they hold God's Word in their hands and Scripture is fully worthy of their trust.

As a mom, a pastor's wife and a teacher, my heart aches over the knowledge of the many

voices that hound believers these days with half truths. But I also rejoice, because I know that what Peter said hundreds of years ago still rings true today. God's Word is trustworthy. And I'll never get tired of reminding myself, my children and fellow believers of that wonderful, powerful truth.

### EXPLORE THE BIBLE With trust

2 PETER 1:12-21



Ann Hibbard  
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### BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE Unstoppable courage

ACTS 4:1-3, 8-12, 19-20



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What have you seen and heard? Take a look at Acts 4:20 and work backwards through this passage. We are continuing to look at Peter and John in the early days after Pentecost. These two men were out proclaiming the resurrection of Jesus, and the ruling council of the Jews wanted them to stop.

They refused, citing that they simply could not stop speaking of what they had seen and heard. They had witnessed the truth, and now they absolutely had to bear witness to the truth.

Many of us fall back from speaking boldly for Christ. We justify ourselves and our fears by saying we do not know what to say or we are uncertain how we would handle objections. The problem, though, lies in another direction.

Peter and John were eyewitnesses of the resurrection. They were witnesses of the miracles of Jesus, the teaching of Jesus and the compassion of Jesus. They had seen God put on flesh and

dwelt among His people. Because they knew, they not only would not keep silent, they could not keep silent.

We believe that the Bible is the Word of God. If that is the case, then we have just as much evidence that Jesus is risen as Peter and John did. We have as much evidence that Jesus healed the sick and raised the dead as anyone in Jerusalem had. We can be as certain of the compassion of God, of the mercy shown through Christ and of the power of the Holy Spirit as any of the apostles ever were. We have seen and heard of this Jesus just as much as they had.

Yet we keep silent. We will tell of our grandchildren or our teams. We will overcome great difficulties to encounter good shopping and great deer hunting.

Too many of us live as if we have seen and heard nothing of the grace of God. Let us remember the reality of our faith and speak boldly of Jesus!

NOVEMBER 20, 2016

I'm often asked, "Where in the Bible is \_\_\_\_\_?" Or, "Do you know that verse that says \_\_\_\_\_?" Too frequently, the question is followed up with a story, a quote or an idea that, at best, is a concept taken completely out of context. At worst, it's not in Scripture anywhere and actually cannot even be supported by Scripture.

My kids have a joke about such questions and comments. They say it's like Jesus quoting Abraham Lincoln's "House Divided" speech. Now, my children know full well who first stated that a divided house cannot remain standing. But they also know how many people do not realize that Abraham Lincoln was quoting Jesus in his speech. Regardless of what kind of personal relationship he did or did not have with the Lord Jesus Christ, Lincoln had read the Bible, knew what it said and believed its wisdom to be truth.

Sadly, too many of us do not know truth because we fail to follow Lincoln's example. We fail to know God's Word.

There are far too many voices in the world around us who are more than happy to take advantage of our ignorance, using it against us. Like in the days of Peter and Jude, we are surrounded by people who will pour falsehoods into our heads, speaking with smooth confidence and making us believe that they know what

they are talking about. So, we end up lacking a solid standard and foundation of truth.

Jude's words ring just as true today as they did when he first penned them: "But you, beloved, ought to remember the words that were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Jude 17, NASB).

As I raise children in this world full of falsehoods, this is the lesson I strive to continually remind them, and it's one I must remember myself, as well! In a world where truth is shaded and absolutes are ignored, only God's Word can keep us on guard and grounded in truth.

### EXPLORE THE BIBLE On guard

2 PETER 2:1-3, JUDE 16-25



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### BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE Unstoppable impact

ACTS 17:16-18, 22-23, 30-31



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The first verse here, Acts 17:16, is where many of us live. We are surrounded by a pagan culture and find ourselves provoked by the idolatry around us, just as Paul was provoked while he was in Athens.

And let us be clear here: being provoked is a valid response. Athens had, as Arkansas has, many idols.

Some were worshiped through simple offerings like food or money. Others were worshiped through animal or human sacrifice and through immorality as celebration. Paul was not provoked because he was too sensitive to other cultures. He was provoked because wickedness filled the streets.

We can have similar feelings today, but our goal must be to let our response match Paul's response. What did he do? He proclaimed Jesus. He proclaimed Jesus to the religious Jews of the synagogue. He proclaimed Jesus to the Gentiles who were seeking Israel's God. He was in the public spaces of Athens, the marketplace (*agora*, for you history/Greek nerds) where

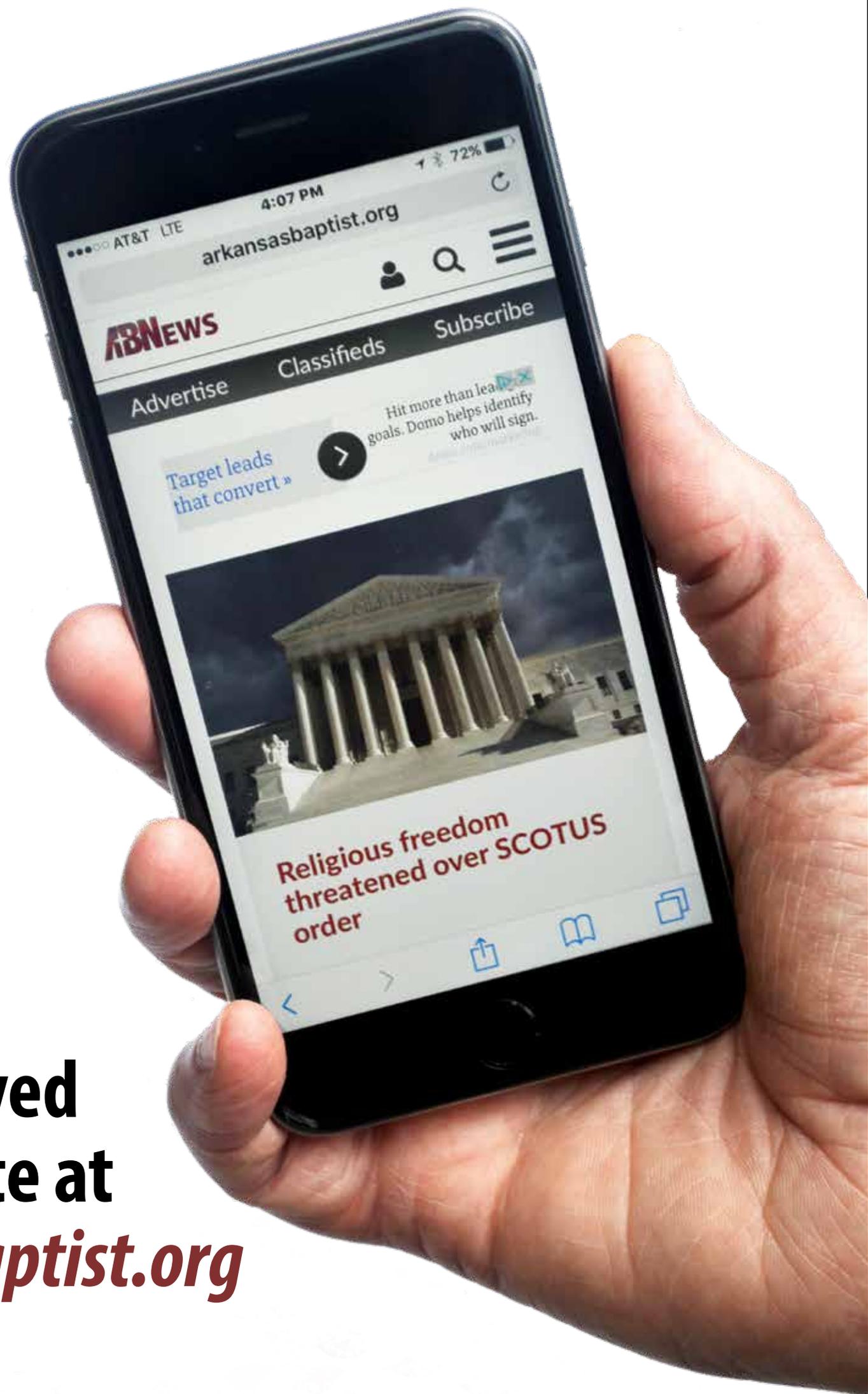
anyone could seek him out to discuss the truth.

He was actively proclaiming Jesus enough to be misunderstood (Acts 17:18). Yet his demeanor and character were enough that, rather than being imprisoned or exiled, he was invited to explain himself better. He was provided the opportunity to, once again, proclaim Jesus.

He then clearly preached Jesus even as he demonstrated an understanding of Athens and its people. His gospel proclamation did not result in a large church or a massive revival, but we see that a few believed.

What of us? Abortion, child abuse and corruption should all provoke us as our culture turns to the idols that drive such sinfulness. How shall we respond?

The best way is to take that provocation and let it drive us to proclaim Jesus. Let us live lives of character that drive others to listen as we preach the truth of the one true God and the Savior, Christ the Lord.



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