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# Baptist universities invest in students' spiritual growth

Trennis Henderson  
Ouachita Baptist University

ARCADELPHIA – From the early years of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC), Arkansas Baptists have strongly supported Christian higher education. That commitment continues today through longstanding partnerships with Ouachita Baptist University and Williams Baptist College.

Ouachita, founded in 1886, “seeks to foster a love of God and a love of learning” among its students. The university’s mission statement emphasizes its role as “a Christ-centered learning community.” Williams, which has been affiliated with the ABSC since the early 1950s, seeks to provide a “holistically Christian, liberal arts education, while compassionately shaping students’ lives.”

While a student’s college years typically are shaped by academic challenges and discovery, extracurricular pursuits and deep personal relationships, opportunities for personal spiritual growth are a distinctive aspect of Christian higher education.

Options for spiritual development and impact abound on the campuses of both Ouachita and Williams. In addition to weekly

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Ouachita Baptist University senior Estefanie Perez, a business administration and mass communications double major from Maracaibo, Venezuela, worships during one of the school’s weekly chapel services.

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## ABN Digest

Stories of interest  
to Arkansas Baptists

### Rallies call for defunding of Planned Parenthood

COLUMBIA, Mo. (BP) – Pro-life demonstrators held rallies Feb. 11 at more than 220 Planned Parenthood clinics in 45 states to advocate withdrawing government funds from America's largest abortion provider. Meanwhile, a petition drive led by Southern Baptists' Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission has garnered nearly 8,000 signatures on a letter asking Congress "to support the budget resolution that defunds Planned Parenthood and redirects funding to federally qualified health centers." Federally qualified health centers, which meet women's health care needs without providing abortions, outnumber Planned Parenthood centers in America by a 13 to 1 margin, according to Protestpp.com, the official website of the Feb. 11 rallies.

### Churches becoming more conservative

CHURCHES have made a "slight movement" to the right in the past five years, according to the American Congregations 2015 study. Taken together, the percentage of congregations described as conservative climbed more than three points to 70 percent of all American churches. At the other end of the theological spectrum, liberal churches remained a small minority of American churches. Research from the Hartford Institute for Religion Research connected the conservative shift with the "slide" of a social justice emphasis among churches. In 2005, just over 48 percent of churches agreed or strongly agreed their congregation was working for social justice. Since then, the percentage of churches who agreed declined to less than 44 percent.

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# Prestonwood escrows CP over SBC concerns

Will Hall  
Baptist Message

PLANO, Texas – Prestonwood Baptist Church has announced its decision to escrow gifts previously forwarded to support Southern Baptist cooperative missions and ministries while the congregation discusses concerns about the direction of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Mike Buster, executive pastor for the Plano, Texas, church, provided a statement to the (Louisiana) *Baptist Message* Feb. 16 explaining that the action had been taken because of "various significant positions taken by the leadership of the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) that do not reflect the beliefs and values of many in the Southern Baptist

Convention" and that it is a temporary move "until a decision can be made on current and future funding."

The decision impacts \$1 million the 41,000-member congregation would otherwise contribute through the



Cooperative Program, Southern Baptists' primary funding channel for support of state and national causes.

Russell Moore, president of the ERLC, has created tensions among Southern Baptists by signing a friend of the court brief in support of the construction of a mosque, and, for

making strident insults against evangelical supporters of then-presidential candidate Donald Trump during the 2016 election process.

In such publications as the *Washington Post*, he condemned those who disagreed with him as "the old-school political Religious Right," caricaturing them as "doctrinally vacuous." He also broadly asserted that self-identified evangelical Trump voters "may well be drunk right now, and haven't been into a church since someone invited them to Vacation Bible School sometime back when 'Seinfeld' was in first-run episodes."

But Jack Graham, who is the senior pastor of Prestonwood and a former president of the Southern Baptist Convention, subsequently explained to the *Baptist Mes-*

sage that his congregation's concerns are broader than just one personality.

Instead, he described an "uneasiness" among church leaders about the "disconnect between some of our denominational leaders and our churches."

"I'm not angry at the SBC, and neither are our people," Graham said, "and I'm not working to start a movement to fire anyone."

"This is a difficult decision for me, personally," he added. "I love Southern Baptists, and still want to be a cooperating partner as we have been for many years."

"We're just concerned about the direction of the Southern Baptist Convention, and feel the need to make some changes in the way we give."

This article was written by Will Hall, editor of the *Louisiana Baptist Message*.

## Gaines shares thoughts on prayer, SBC, nation

STEVE GAINES, senior pastor at Bellevue Baptist Church in Cordova, Tenn., and current president of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) discussed prayer and a number of hot-button national and denominational areas of concern in the *Arkansas Baptist News Podcast* 58, expanding on the topics in a question-and-answer session with state paper editors meeting in Ontario, Calif., Feb. 15.

Regarding President Donald Trump, Gaines, who acknowledged that he voted for Ted Cruz in the primary and Trump in the general election, said that he has been "encouraged," by Vice President Mike Pence, who "loves the Lord," and spoke at the recent March for Life in Washington, D.C., and that he approves of most of Trump's Cabinet picks as well as Supreme Court nominee Neil Gorsuch.

He told editors that the only way to really make America great again is by winning people to Jesus Christ and mentoring them and changing society through the people they influence.

Regarding prayer for our elected leaders, Gaines said, "I pray for him (President

Trump) every day. That's what we all need to do." He added that he also had prayed for former President Barack Obama and his family virtually every day during Obama's eight years in office.

"God does things when we pray that God doesn't do when we don't pray," he said, speaking to host Bill Bumpas, in the *Arkansas Baptist News (ABN) Podcast* 58.

Discussing the fallout following the issuance of Trump's executive order on immigration, Gaines told editors, "Christians need to remember that we have dual citizenship, with our allegiance first to the kingdom of God. ... To some degree we have more in common with a believer in a lost country than an unbeliever in our own country. We certainly need to vet people coming into our nation to be sure we are safe from those who would do us harm."

Still, he does not want America to turn its back on refugees. "How can your heart not go out to those people who are today fleeing from wars and violence? We need to remember that at some level we are all immigrants to America."

Concerning Russell Moore,



Steve Gaines (right), pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in Cordova, Tenn., and president of the Southern Baptist Convention, speaks with Bill Bumpas, host of the *Arkansas Baptist News Podcast*, Jan. 30, during the Arkansas Baptist State Convention's evangelism conference. Photo by Caleb Yarbrough

president of the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC), coming under fire for his stance against Donald Trump as he was running for president, he said he hoped there would be less divisive talk coming from the ERLC.

"I hope the kind of talk we have been hearing is not the direction in which we are going. I hope Russell will remain in his position and that we have reconciliation with a

lot of people," he added.

Gaines said he tried to keep an open mind as he was weighing the options for president – seeking to gather as much information as possible – but was disappointed when he was criticized after attending a Trump event on the day Trump's candidacy for president was announced, something he said he would



# Platt apologizes for IMB amicus brief

ONTARIO, Calif. (BP) – International Mission Board (IMB) President David Platt has apologized to Southern Baptists for the divisive nature of an amicus brief the IMB joined last May in support of a New Jersey's Islamic society's right to build a mosque.

"I apologize to Southern Baptists for how distracting and divisive this has been," Platt said Feb. 15 during a meeting with Baptist state paper editors in Ontario, Calif.

"I can say with full confidence," he said, "that in the days ahead, IMB will have a process in place to keep us focused on our primary mission: partnering with churches to empower limitless missionary teams for evangelizing, discipling, planting and multiplying healthy churches, and training leaders among unreached peoples and places for the glory of God."

Platt offered a similar apology to executive directors of Baptist state conventions, who met in the same location.

The apologies occurred amid ongoing discussion of an amicus curiae – Latin for "friend of the court" – brief joined by the IMB supporting the Islamic Society of Basking Ridge, N.J., (ISBR) in its religious discrimination lawsuit against a local planning board. The Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission also joined the brief.

In December, U.S. district Judge Michael Shipp ruled the Planning Board of Bernards Township, N.J., violated federal law when it required

the ISBR to include more than twice as much parking in its site plan for a proposed mosque as it required for local Christian and Jewish houses of worship.

In his ruling, Shipp acknowledged the amicus brief, stating it "supports" the ISBR's arguments that unlawful religious discrimination occurred.

Going forward, Platt said, missions is "what I long for the conversation about the IMB to be focused on, for the sake of those who have never heard."

Platt added, "I am grieved how the amicus brief in the recent mosque case has been so divisive and distracting. And my purpose in bringing it up here is not to debate religious liberty, but to simply say that I really do want IMB to be focused on [its] mission statement."

In the future, a new process for filing amicus briefs is needed, Platt said, "that will involve my office and our trustees." He pledged to discuss such a policy during a Feb. 28-March 1 IMB trustee meeting.

Platt also told editors, "Going back to at least 2010, so far before I stepped into this role, our ... legal department has filed various similar briefs related to religious liberty. And since 2010, all of those matters have been handled by our legal department."

Paul Chitwood, executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention and a former IMB trustee chairman, said Platt's "remarks [to state executive directors] were very well



David Platt, president of the International Mission Board, speaks during a meeting of Baptist state newspaper editors in Ontario, Calif. Photo by Tim Yarbrough

received."

Tennessee Baptist Convention Executive Director Randy Davis told Tennessee's *Baptist and Reflector* newsjournal, "I greatly appreciate the directness and humility that the leader of our flagship missions organization demonstrated in meeting with Baptist state convention executive directors. I saw the same spirit in one-on-one conversations with Dr. Platt."

Davis added, "I am very comfortable from having spent some time with Dr. Platt that this will not be an issue moving forward and that it certainly will be with some level of

involvement by IMB trustees."

Tennessee pastor Dean Haun resigned as an IMB trustee in November because he said joining the brief did not comport with IMB's mission and could be viewed as an improper alliance with followers of a religion that denies the gospel.

Haun's resignation was reported in several Baptist state newspapers last month.

Platt said in a statement last month, "As a result of discussions among IMB trustees and staff over recent months, we have revised our processes for our legal department filing any future amicus briefs."

## ABN Digest

Stories of interest  
to Arkansas Baptists

### U.S. lawmakers call for release of jailed pastor

WASHINGTON (BP) – A bipartisan group of federal lawmakers have signed a letter calling for the release of Andrew Brunson, a U.S. citizen believed to have been jailed for his Christian faith in Turkey where he had pastored more than 23 years. The chairman and ranking members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the House Foreign Affairs Committee are among 78 signatories of the letter calling for Brunson's release, Senate committee chairman Bob Corker (R-Tenn.) said in a Feb. 16 press release. Brunson, formerly of Black Mountain, N.C., has been held since October 2016 on accusations of being a member of an armed terrorist group.

"The United States and Turkey have benefited from a close partnership for decades, and we hope to be in a position to continue strengthening these ties," reads the letter sent Feb. 15 to Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. "Now is the time for our countries to reaffirm respect for fundamental freedoms and the rule of law while reasserting our shared commitment to addressing security challenges through partnership and cooperation."

Brunson, identified as an Evangelical Presbyterian by the Presbyterian Lay Committee, had led the Izmir Resurrection Church of about 40 worshippers in Izmir without government interference until he and his wife Norine sought to renew their visas. Brunson is accused of having links with the Fetullah Gulen movement, blamed by the Turkish government for a failed military coup against Erdogan.

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# Arkansas DR volunteers deploy to Louisiana

NEW ORLEANS, La. – Arkansas Baptist disaster relief (DR) volunteers recently deployed to Louisiana to aid victims affected by severe thunderstorms and tornados which struck the southern part of the state Feb. 7.

Arkansas DR volunteers served in the Gentilly area of New Orleans, La., one of the areas hit hardest by the storms.

Damage surveys conducted by the National Weather Service confirmed the tornado that ripped through New Or-

leans and its suburbs to have been rated an EF-3, or "a significant tornado," the *Washington Post* reported Feb. 8.

According to Michelle Hendrix, Arkansas Baptist State Convention missions team member, the following Arkansas Baptist DR units and teams were deployed to Louisiana: the Delta Feeding Team, Arkansas Valley Recovery Unit, Southwest Recovery Unit, Tri-County Recovery Unit and Ozark Laundry Unit. Five chaplains were also deployed.



Arkansas Baptist DR volunteers remove a felled tree from a home in New Orleans, La.



# 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)

## Responding to lawlessness of our age

All Americans should be very concerned that activist judges have taken it on themselves to legislate from their benches.

In recent years judicial activism has taken a number of forms, with the 2015 Supreme Court decision legalizing same-sex marriage probably being the most sweeping and impactful to our society as a whole.

Now we have the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals attempting to set immigration policy for the entire country by striking down President Donald Trump's temporary ban on immigration from countries known to harbor terrorists.

If you think about it, it is

unbelievable that appointed judges would attempt to make security decisions for an entire country, instead of dutifully elected legislators and the president of the United States.

I'm not an attorney, but the best I can tell, the president's authority over immigration under the law is clear.

### Pressing On

Tim Yarbrough  
Phil. 3:14

A liberal court's attempt to take away the authority of the president – who was elected by the people to run the country – flies in the face of the U. S. Constitution and the rule of law.

It is well known that many of the judges sitting on these benches – like the Ninth Circuit court – graduated from or taught at liberal colleges

and universities. Therefore, their decisions must be evaluated through that lens, with the conclusion being that judges on this court may be more concerned with championing far left causes and looking good in the mainstream media than doing what is right for the country under the law.

It is undeniable that we are headed toward a constitutional crisis if activist judges are allowed to continue to supersede our country's laws.

So, for those who naively thought our cultural problems were over by electing President Trump, it appears to me that they may just be beginning.

U.S. presidents have historically been apprehensive to defy the courts, but today there may be little choice if

our society is to be saved.

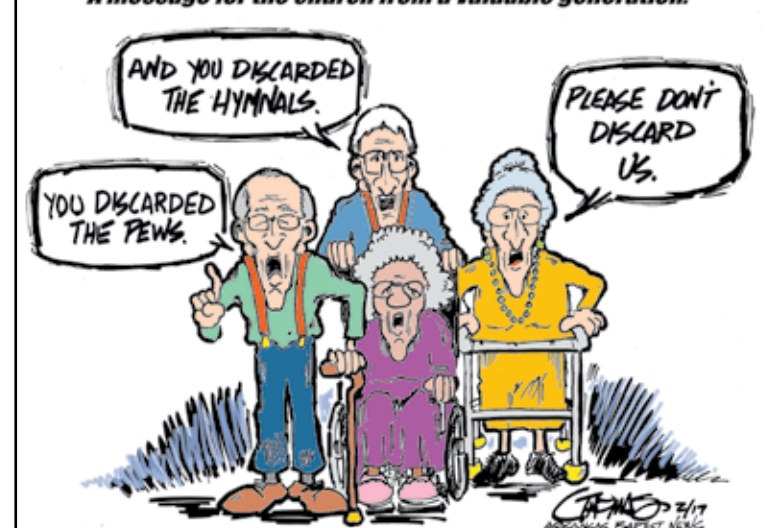
The United States is a representative democracy rooted in the Judeo-Christian tradition, which is based on natural law.

People behaving in ways contrary to the law originates in the fall of man (Genesis 3). Moreover, 1 Timothy 1:9 says

See **LAWLESS** page 6

Cartoon by Gary Thomas

*A message for the church from a valuable generation.*



## Partisan political speech from the pulpit: good idea or bad idea?

Partisan political speech from the pulpit: good idea or bad idea?

At the recent National Prayer Breakfast, President Donald Trump reiterated a pledge that he made several times during his campaign last year. According to the Associated Press, he said, "I will get rid of and totally destroy the Johnson Amendment and allow our representatives of faith to speak freely and without fear of retribution."

The president was referring to an amendment to the Internal Revenue Code that then-Sen. Lyndon Baines Johnson introduced and

pushed through Congress in 1954. It seems Sen. Johnson was livid about some Texas non-profit groups (not churches, it's interesting to note) that had sought to defeat his campaign for a Senate seat.

The amendment to the tax

code that bears his name prohibits nonprofit organizations, which by definition

include churches and most religious, faith-based groups, from expressing support for or opposition to candidates for elective office or political parties. Loss of tax-exempt status is a potential sanction that could be imposed against

a church for violating the Johnson Amendment. At the center of the debate is what many see as the muzzling of pastors and a denial of their free speech when in the pulpit or speaking in an official or representative capacity for their churches.

It should be noted that there are no constraints – legal, ethical or otherwise – on churches and pastors – whether in the pulpit or out – from speaking to the moral, cultural and philosophical issues confronting us. This principle applies even when the particular issue makes it into the political arena. The Church and its leaders should not be reluctant to speak about matters of faith as they relate to the sanctity of

life, marriage and family, race relations, alcohol and other drugs, pornography, gambling, welfare of children and so many other issues.

As I see it, whether Congress cooperates with President Trump and repeals the Johnson Amendment is irrelevant as a practical matter. The law is almost certainly unenforceable; that is the reason the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has not taken significant steps to sanction a church for violating that law for more than 20 years. The IRS recognizes a number of problems in trying to enforce the Johnson Amendment. First, the consensus among the legal community is that the law is an unconstitutional infringement of free speech

guaranteed by the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

Second, every year, there are hundreds, maybe thousands, of instances of partisan political speech being expressed from the pulpit or in church newsletters, messages or other communiques. To try and enforce the law now after giving it a wink and a nod for so long is an untenable proposition for the IRS and the U.S. Department of Justice.

As an ordained minister and a licensed attorney, I have a position that is a bit different than most. As stated earlier, the Johnson Amendment is probably unconstitutional

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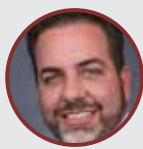
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## Ask and share



## Family Matters

Ben Phillips

One Sunday morning I pulled into a church parking lot and sat there for a moment in my car, praying before I walked into the church where I would be preaching later that morning. While sitting in my car, I noticed a car pull into a handicap parking spot. I saw an older man exit the car, open his trunk and pull out a wheelchair. He then moved over to the passenger side where he carefully helped his wife move to the wheelchair. He then wheeled her into the church.

I met the couple in the sanctuary and told the man that I had seen him help his wife out of the car into the wheelchair. I affirmed him for his faithfulness in coming to church and in serving his wife. During my sermon, I asked all couples who had celebrated 50-plus years of marriage to raise their hands. This couple raised their hands. Couples who have stood the test of time are models for the next generation to look up to and learn from.

Older couples have a great opportunity to pass along the wisdom they've gained over their decades of marriage. Please take the time to invest in the next generation by vulnerably sharing some of your wisdom and experiences. Even if younger people aren't asking you questions, then share with them anyway. They need to hear from you, even if they don't realize it.

Younger couples have a great opportunity to gain wisdom from older couples in the church. Please take the time to ask older couples to share their experiences and wisdom. Even if they aren't sharing their wisdom, then be bold and inquisitive and ask them to share.

The church provides an opportunity for accountability, mentoring and transformation through the truth of Scripture that strengthens marriages for the long haul. Open your eyes to examples around you, and open your ears to gain wisdom for your journey. By asking and sharing, you'll both gain wisdom, strengthen marriages, build up the body of Christ and make a difference in another couple's life.

Ben Phillips serves on the ABSC evangelism and church health team.

## A call to reach the nations: Part 1

The call to reach the nations is a clear and direct command in Scripture. Matthew 28:18 commands us to "Go and make disciples of all nations...."

Arkansas Baptists take this command seriously as demonstrated by sending missionaries, going on mission trips, church planting, prayer and the increased missions giving by our churches.

The growing and increasing passion of Arkansas Baptists for international missions is one of the most refreshing new trends in recent years. This must continue. However, we must be aware of what God is doing by sending the nations to Arkansas.

One of the prime opportunities that we must immediately seize and embrace is a renewed focus on international populations in Arkansas. Today I will focus specifically on international students in Arkansas colleges and universities.

During the 2015–2016 school year there were 6,507 international students attending college in Arkansas. Currently there are more than 100 nations represented at the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville. There are more than 60 nations represented at the University of Central Arkansas, the University of Arkansas at Little Rock and Arkansas State University at Jonesboro. There are 1,144 international students from 33 nations – 1,029 of from India – attending Southern Arkansas University (SAU) in Magnolia. The next highest international student numbers at SAU are from Saudi Arabia, Nigeria, Nepal, Canada,

China and Brazil.

The commitment of Arkansas Baptist churches to support Baptist collegiate ministries on 36 campuses in Arkansas is one of the key strategies to impacting these students with the gospel. Another strategic component is churches that have ministries to college students. We have identified 60 "college engaged churches" who currently have ministries to college students, with 25 of these engaged with international college students.

As Arkansas Baptists we must have a sense of responsibility and urgency to impact these students.

There are at least four ways you can be involved in ministry to international students.

First, pray intentionally that God would stir them with a yearning to respond to the gospel. Second, educate your congregation on this incredible need and opportunity. Third, seek ways to engage on a personal level and on the church level. If you are not near international students your church could partner with one of the college-engaged churches. Fourth, train your people in the best ways to minister to international students after you identify avenues in which to engage in this ministry.

International students on Arkansas college campuses are one of the greatest opportunities God has given us to impact international missions. As Arkansas Baptists let's seize this moment!

J.D. "Sonny" Tucker is executive director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC).



## Executive Directions

Sonny Tucker

## The essence of discipleship

Raised in the Delta of northeast Arkansas, I was familiar with poverty. For as long as I can remember, both my parents worked extremely hard to provide for our family. Until my third-grade year, my dad worked as a farmhand. His compensation included a small salary, the crop proceeds from a small piece of land, and the farmhouse in which we lived. Then, until failing health forced him to retire, he provided for our family as a jack-of-all-trades handyman. Mom worked for the Marked Tree school system for 42 years as a cook in the cafeteria. She retired four years ago at the age of 79. Although we never had much, we always had what we needed, and my parents taught us by example to be generous with what we had. The reality is, there was always another family who had less.

Generosity is a characteristic that reflects the heart of God, especially as it relates to the poor. "For there will never cease to be poor people in the land; that is why I am commanding you, 'You must willingly open your hand to your afflicted and poor brother in your land'" (Deut. 15:11, HCSB). "A generous person will be blessed, for he shares his food with the poor" (Prov. 22:9, HCSB).

One of the three essential intents of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC) is to "focus our evangelism partnerships toward people that are unengaged, unreached, and underserved in access to the gospel." As a result, there is an increasingly intentional focus among ABSC churches on ministry to the underserved. I celebrate this trend, especially among churches located in the Delta. There are some incredible stories coming out of the Delta of how God is using ministry to the underserved to revitalize churches and expand His kingdom. In addition to the *Arkansas Baptist News* and the ABSC websites, you can rejoice in what God is doing in the Delta by following The Delta Network of Arkansas on Facebook.

In the fall of 2016, First Baptist Church, Stuttgart, launched what we believe is going to be an incredible

ministry for our community addressing hunger and racial reconciliation needs.

Birthing in the heart of one of our members, Community Table is a weekly ministry providing a hot meal to families in our community. Members of First Baptist and Southside Baptist Church, Stuttgart, prepare and serve the meal, then sit with individuals and families around tables as we share the meal together and share lives with one another. Christian music is played (most often live), and a gospel presentation is shared. Not only are we addressing hunger needs, but relationships are being formed among people from diverse backgrounds, and in those relationships the gospel is being fleshed out and voiced.

Our prayer is that Community Table becomes an example throughout our community of the power of the gospel to break down the dividing wall of hostility known as

racism. Praise God, we are beginning to see that happen. We are also beginning to see lives transformed. Recently through conversation around a table, a young dad trusted Christ as his Savior. As a pastor, I am grateful for the transformation I personally see in the lives of our members. Stepping out of our comfort zones to engage in missional living among the poor transforms us. We no longer see the poor as "them" – a project on our spiritual to-do list – but as "us" – brothers and sisters created in the image of God. As we bring Christ to the poor, we find Christ among the poor, and our lives are changed. This is the essence of discipleship!

If you are interested in leading the church to engage the underserved in your community, contact Bob Harper, Breck Freeman or another member of the ABSC missions team. There are many resources available to help you share the Bread of Life with those living in poverty in your community.

Sam Roberts is senior pastor of First Baptist Church in Stuttgart and president of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention.



## President's Perspective

Sam Roberts



# Free speech under fire

HIGHLIGHTED by a recent riot on a college campus in California, free speech is under fire.

Of all the amendments to the U.S. Constitution, the First Amendment is the most definitive to American society. The protections it provides to U.S. citizens, including the freedoms of religion, speech, petition, assembly, the press and association, are unprecedented.

Yet, a growing sentiment in our country, almost entirely based on the radical ideologies of many on the political left, is that these protections should not apply to individuals with views differing from their own.

In the case of a Feb. 1 riot on the campus of the University of California (UC)-Berkeley, a group of protesters, many wearing black face coverings to conceal their identities, successfully caused the cancellation of a Berkeley College Republicans event in which conservative provocateur and editor at Breitbart News, Milo Yiannopoulos, was

scheduled to speak.

Prior to the event, more than 100 faculty members of the university signed their names in support of a letter written to the school's chancellor, Nicholas Dirks, in which they called for Yiannopoulos' speaking engagement to be cancelled, claiming his "harmful conduct" as a reason to stop the event.

The letter claimed that Yiannopoulos' speech should not be considered "protected free speech"

because it could "publicly target individuals in his audience or on campus, creating conditions for concrete harm and actually harming students through defamatory and harassing actions."

While there are limits to free speech protections, the motivation of the faculty's letter is clear – to silence an individual who espouses ideas contrary to their own.

While opposition to free speech has been reported on other college campuses, the fact that it happened on the

campus of UC-Berkeley is ironic because of the school's historic designation as the center of the free speech movement, a protest taking place in the mid-1960s in which UC-Berkeley students called for the university's administration to lift

a ban on on-campus political activities and recognize their rights to free speech and academic freedom.

"One of the easiest ways to dismiss and to shut down an argument you don't like is to actually identify it as harass-

ment or slander or defamation or hate speech, whether it is or not. ... Any government authority that has the right to decide what harassment and slander and defamation and

See **FREE SPEECH** page 7



## Call & Response

Caleb Yarbrough

## OBU makes international impact

### ABSC Agencies

Last semester, a Japanese exchange student was asked why she chose to come to Ouachita Baptist University. She unswervingly replied, "Because I want to know about Jesus! My friend came here last year and became a Christian, so I wanted to come here too!" At Ouachita, we truly believe that God handpicks the international students He sends our way.



## Ouachita Baptist

Sharon Cosh

This student and many others have been attending an intentionally prepared peer-led Bible study for international students. It served to whet her spiritual appetite. At spring preregistration, she persistently requested to take Scott Duvall's Life of Christ class.

Trying to convince her that it was too difficult for her with limited English and no Bible background knowledge, she insisted that she really wanted to learn about the life of Jesus. "I don't want to see her miss the message for the

struggle," Duvall responded.

So this spring, our Grant Center for International Education's English as a Second Language (ESL) program is offering an elective New Testament class, modifying Duvall's gracious gift of his original, personal notes for

his popular Living God's Story text. "I've never heard this story before, but I like it!"

said one of our students from Ukraine.

In addition to offering a full ESL program, internationals on campus encounter many relationally rich opportunities to become incorporated into campus life. Currently, preparations are underway for our annual International Food Festival on Feb. 28. About 500 guests will savor the delights of cuisine and talent in our globally diverse community of students, faculty and staff from more than 30 nations.

Guests also will learn more about the global refugee plight through their senses – tasting nutritious, pre-

packed food distributed to the hungry; eating specially cooked Syrian or Middle Eastern dishes; listening to refugees share their experiences; learning more about creative business opportunities for housing refugees; and being able to purchase Woman's Missionary Union Worldcraft products made by refugees. Our students currently are gathering items for refugee welcome kits that ministry teams will take with them while working with refugees during spring break.

This semester, Ouachita is offering its first of four online Teaching English as a Second Language classes to equip teachers, prepare workers in their communities and train those serving internationally.

Ouachita welcomes our international students and seeks creative ways in which we can mutually learn from each other. Our mission field is right here, and we are thankful!

Sharon Cosh, a 1996 Ouachita graduate, is Ouachita Baptist University's ESL coordinator.

## SPEECH

continued from page 4

and, therefore, it should be repealed. However, whether repealed or not, pastors should refrain from making statements endorsing or opposing candidates or political parties when in the pulpit or speaking in a representative or formal role for the church. A pastor at such times has a captive audience and is speaking with apparent authority, which might unduly influence some of the church members in matters best left to be decided by them exercising their personal autonomy. Is that a proper role for a pastor? Probably not. The pulpit should be reserved for what it was intended – the desk from which the gospel is expounded and Christ is exalted – and not a platform for a political stump speech.

Church members are capable of thinking critically and analytically. They can examine what the candidates or parties stand for and what

values they embrace, contrast those with biblical principles, and vote accordingly. If members want to know the pastor's political preferences in relation to candidates and parties, they are free to ask him in a number of private or semi-private settings, and he is free to share his opinions with them in those venues.

Our churches should not resemble political parties, candidates' political action committees or offshoots of special interest groups. Our calling is higher, nobler and far more important. Eternal consequences hang in the balance, and we must zealously guard against doing or saying anything that would relegate the gospel to anything short of its preeminence in our undertakings. To answer the question posed above, let's just say that partisan political speech from the pulpit is indeed a bad idea. Just because one has a right to do something doesn't mean it is the right thing to do.

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

## LAWLESS

continued from page 4

laws are necessary in a sinful world: "understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers."

Just as sin entered the world through the rebellion of Adam and Eve, those who choose to act lawlessly further

sin in the world. 1 John 3:4 is perhaps the classic statement of the relation of lawlessness and sin, asserting "Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness."

Therefore, according to the Bible, the root of all lawlessness is literally rebellion against God.

Not since the 1960s have protests exploded across the country like they have since the election of Donald Trump. In these many protests and riots we see lawlessness and the complete disregard for authority and order.

In Acts 19:21-41 a riot in Ephesus demonstrates this type of lawlessness. Just as many rioters today, many were confused and unsure, even, of why they were rioting, according to verse 32. Also, as today, they ignored proper channels for their grievances (v. 39) in their law breaking.

As in the time of the early church, we must pray without ceasing for the souls of the growing number of lawless in our society who are misguided and blinded by our present age.

Tim Yarbrough is editor/executive director of the ABN.

# Open letter says refugee ban 'deeply' concerning

WASHINGTON (BP) – A full-page ad in the Feb. 8 *Washington Post* expressing concern over a portion of President Donald Trump's executive order on immigration included the signatures of at least seven Southern Baptists among a coalition of some 100 evangelicals.

Two of the signatories – former Southern Baptist Convention President Bryant Wright and Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary President Daniel Akin – said their signatures reflect a specific policy disagreement and not a blanket repudiation of the president's approach to immigration.

The ad was coordinated by

the National Association of Evangelicals' World Relief arm and phrased in the form of an open letter to Trump and Vice President Mike Pence.

Meanwhile, a federal appeals court upheld a lower court ruling Feb. 9 temporarily blocking the travel ban from taking effect. The lower court now will determine whether the ban is legal. The case is expected to rise to the U.S. Supreme Court.

## Disagreement with order

Wright, pastor of Johnson Ferry Baptist Church in Marietta, Ga., said the open letter signed by evangelicals expresses a disagreement with

[Trump's] decision on the order. "But still, the headlines like to sensationalize."

While the signatories stated they are "deeply concerned by the recently announced moratorium on refugee resettlement," they also "welcome[d] the concern expressed [in the order] for religious minorities, including persecuted Christians."

Akin said in a statement, "I respect the president and support his concern for safe and secure borders. I simply believe the policy laid out in his executive order on January 27, as it specifically pertains to our refugee resettlement program, is not the best approach."

Other Southern Baptists to sign the statement include William Coates, pastor of First Baptist Church in Gainesville,

Ga.; Eric Costanzo, pastor of South Tulsa Baptist Church in Tulsa, Okla.; Matthew Mason, pastor of The Church at Brook Hills in Birmingham, Ala.; Ed Stetzer, executive director of the Billy Graham Center for Evangelism at Wheaton College in Wheaton, Ill.; and Jay Wolf, pastor of First Baptist Church in Montgomery, Ala.

The open letter states, "We live in a dangerous world and affirm the crucial role of government in protecting us from harm and in setting the terms on refugee admissions. However, compassion and security can coexist, as they have for decades. For the persecuted and suffering, every day matters;

every delay is a crushing blow to hope."

It adds, "Ministries to newly arrived refugees are ready and desire to receive many thousands more people than would be allowed under the new executive order."

The signatories stated they are "eager to welcome persecuted Christians ... vulnerable Muslims and people of other faiths or no faith at all."

Trump's Jan. 27 order placed a 120-day moratorium on America's refugee admissions program, suspended travel to the U.S. for 90 days from seven Muslim-majority countries and banned Syrian immigrants indefinitely.



Wright



Akin

## GAINES

*continued from page 2*

have done for any presidential candidate.

Speaking to the controversy surrounding the friend of the court brief signed by the International Mission Board (IMB) and ERLC to support construction of a mosque in New York City, Gaines said he believed IMB President David Platt would possibly think twice before signing such a

document again.

"I really don't think he would have signed the document [in favor of the city granting permission to the congregation to build the mosque] if he knew the ramifications," he told editors.

When asked by state newspaper editors about the Cooperative Program (CP), Gaines said there is no biblical justification for churches to tithe 10 percent of their receipts to the CP, regardless of how good the missions support program

is. Churches today have a lot of their own ministries and are doing a wonderful job of reaching their communities for Christ. Those ministries should not be sacrificed for giving to the CP through their state conventions.

He admitted that his church does not give 10 percent, but he and his wife are still motivated to give a tithe because of the good work they see going on in their community and around the world.

Gaines urged unity in the

SBC, even when there are differences of opinion regarding secondary or tertiary matters. There is "too much at stake to allow the enemy to divide us,"

he told Bumpas on the podcast.

"At the end of the day, we are all better together than separate."

## FREE SPEECH

*continued from page 6*

hate speech might be is the government that will trample on your own free speech rights," said Albert Mohler, president of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary,

in the Feb. 7 edition of *The Briefing*.

Mohler went on to argue that the same language used in describing Yiannopoulos' speech as "hate speech" could just as easily be used to describe speech regarding many aspects of a traditional biblical worldview.

As Christians, we should be thankful for the constitutional right to not only worship as we please but to share the gospel without fear of government intervention. However, as can be seen in the judicial activism of recent years, no legislation, however definitive, is sacred. We must stand up for our rights today more than ever.

If we lose free speech, we will lose America as we know and love it.

Caleb Yarbrough is associate editor of the ABN.



# A choice that makes a difference

**Brett Cooper**  
Williams Baptist College

WALNUT RIDGE – For high-school seniors, it must feel like an information tsunami. There are so many colleges to choose from, and each school can flood prospects with reasons to attend there.

Does it really make a difference which college these students eventually choose? Leaders at Christian colleges, in particular, answer that question with a resounding yes.

“There are many reasons we could give for choosing a Christian institution of higher learning, but four key factors to bear in mind are worldview, life direction, personal attention and academic excellence. Christian colleges typically excel in all four of those critical areas,” said Tom Jones, president of Williams Baptist College (WBC).

Jones said worldview is the lens through which we see life, and it has a major impact on spiritual, moral and social behavior.

“Young adults adopt their own worldview during their

college years, which makes it all the more critical that they are exposed to perspectives that can shape a healthy viewpoint on life. A college built on the timeless truths of God’s Word provides those perspectives, whatever major the student is pursuing,” Jones said.

Similarly, important life decisions are apt to be made in the college years. It is the time when young adults make choices on career and marriage as well as the spiritual direction of their lives.

“Most of us can look back on those college years as a time when we set a direction on crucial facets of our life. Our faith became our own, instead of our parents’ faith, and we decided how we would live that out,” Jones said. “It is even more true today, with students making many decisions that would benefit from the direction a Christian college can provide.”

In addition to the obvious spiritual benefits, Jones said that the quality of education at a Christian institution is also outstanding. In part, that is because of the personal atten-

tion students tend to receive at such schools. Christian colleges typically feature smaller classes and low student-to-teacher ratios, ensuring individual attention.

The quality of education at a Christian institution also tends to be higher, and the academic environment, more challenging, because of the faculty at those colleges.

“A strong Christian college is going to be staffed by professors who view teaching as more of a calling than a career. They have a passion for imparting knowledge in their chosen academic discipline, and that pays dividends those students will enjoy for the rest of their lives,” Jones said.

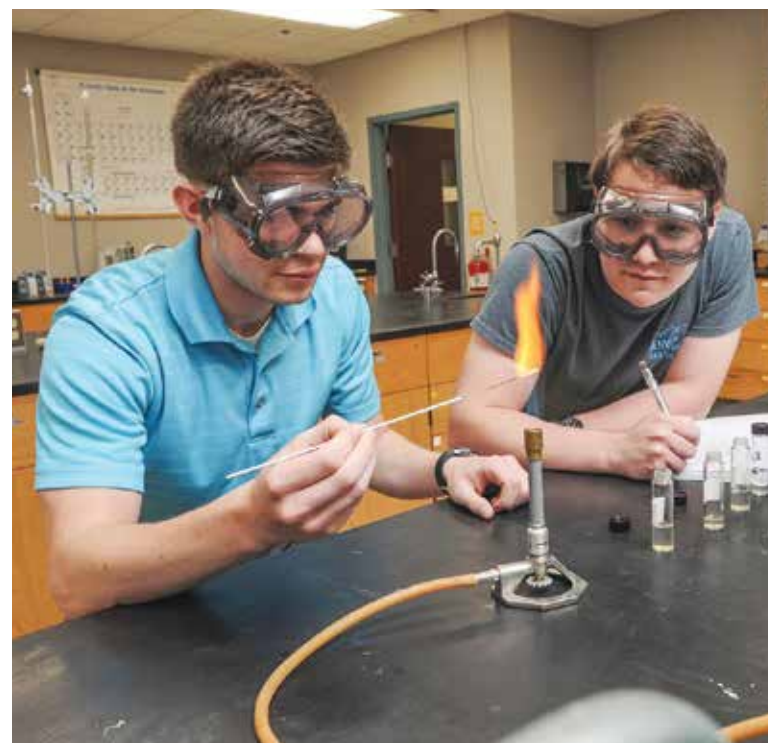
The WBC president also noted that parents, pastors and student ministers play a key role in helping students choose the college that best fits their needs.

“College is one of the most formative times in a young adult’s life,” Jones said. “We need to be aware that a student’s decision on where to attend college really does make a difference.”

*Brett Cooper is vice president for institutional advancement at Williams Baptist College.*



Jones



Students experiment in a science class at Ouachita Baptist University. OBU photo

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## WBC to launch MAT degree

WALNUT RIDGE – Williams Baptist College (WBC) has received approval from its accrediting agency to begin offering a master of arts in teaching (MAT) degree.

The Higher Learning Commission gave its final approval at the beginning of February for Williams to begin the master's program, which will be completely online. Enrollment will begin in March, with classes set to start in May, according to Brad Baine, WBC's academic dean.

"This approval will allow Williams to provide graduate students the opportunity to enter the teaching profession," Baine said. "An individual who meets the criteria of admission into the Williams MAT program and has completed the Arkansas Department of Education requirements for a provisional teaching license becomes immediately eligible to be hired in a school district."

Baine said the program is open to those who have received a bachelor of science or a bachelor of arts degree and taken the necessary education licensure exams.

RoseMary Weaver, dean of graduate and online programs at WBC, is heading the new master's program. She noted the Williams MAT program will be flexible to accommodate the schedules of its students.

"This is not your typical 'go-to-class' degree. The masters of arts in teaching at WBC is online, and quality is the standard," Weaver said.

"It also allows students to take advantage of the respected status of WBC educators," she said.

The Williams Teacher Education Program at WBC offers bachelor's degrees in eight different majors.

For more information contact Weaver at [rweaver@wb-coll.edu](mailto:rweaver@wb-coll.edu) or 870-759-4230.

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# Christian counseling conference Feb. 24 at Ouachita Baptist Univ.

ARKADELPHIA – Ouachita Baptist University (OBU) will host the seventh annual Conference on Issues in Christian Counseling Feb. 24 in the Walker Conference Center. Addressing “Adolescent Issues,” the conference is sponsored by Ouachita’s Pruet School of Christian Studies, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and the Arkansas Baptist State Convention.

William Viser, the event creator and a speaker for the conference, is professor of Christian ministries at Ouachita and founded the Safe Harbour Christian Counseling Center in Arkadelphia, where he has served for 21 years. Viser said his goals when creating this conference were to offer a high quality Christian professional conference to this area of the state and to bring pastors and

health professionals together.

“What I really hope people take away from this conference is just a deeper love for people and a deeper passion to help them. I hope that they gain knowledge that they can

great problems that adolescents face.”

Conference attendees are eligible to earn eight clock hours through the National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC). Credit is approved for licensed alcohol and abuse counselors, professional counselors and marriage and family counselors. National career counselors and nursing and social work professionals also are approved to earn credit.

Additionally, a pastoral track is offered at the conference. Sessions include “Basic Helps for Pastoral Counseling” led by Viser, “How to Help Teens in Crisis” led by Aaron A. New and

“Helping Teens from Broken Homes” led by Derek Brown. “Topics and Issues Related to Pastoral Counseling” will be a Q-and-A session with a panel of counselors from the

See **CONFERENCE** page 11



Students walking on campus at Ouachita Baptist University. OBU photo

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# EDUCATION

continued from page one

chapel services, students have opportunity to participate in small-group Bible studies,

mission projects and student-led worship services – Refuge at Ouachita and Collide at Williams.

Ouachita recently hosted its annual Christian Focus Week (CFW), highlighting the theme, In His Image,

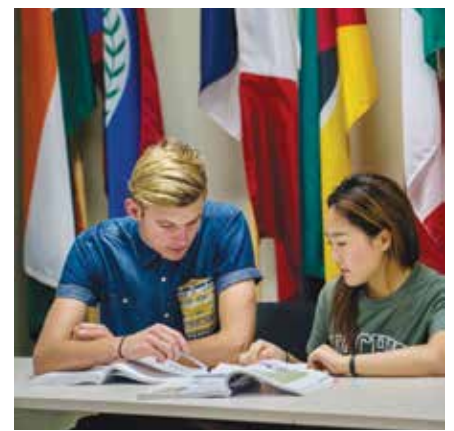
based on 2 Corinthians 3:18 (NIV), “And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.”

The week features worship services, breakout sessions, a concert and other events offered as “a time of spiritual emphasis designed to inspire, challenge, teach and equip students, faculty and staff to be disciples of Jesus Christ.”

“Every aspect of CFW is planned to point to our sweet Savior, to bring Him glory, to learn more about Him and grow closer to Him,” said Emily Weeden, a senior worship arts major from Rogers and a member of the CFW leadership team.

James Taylor, Ouachita’s campus ministries director, said that even amid intentional spiritual emphases, individual relationships remain the key to authentic spiritual development on Christian campuses.

“Over the past week, I happened to run across a faculty member having coffee with an international student one day and eating lunch with two students in the cafeteria the next, and today I saw him visiting with recent alumni who are headed overseas as missionaries,” Taylor said. “This same professor has regularly given up holiday time over Christmas to take students to a missions conference.



Students study at Ouachita Baptist University. OBU photo

“At schools like Ouachita, this kind of professor is not an exception, but part of a culture that values relationships,” he added. “Discipleship is not limited to a program that happens one hour a week, but often comes through impromptu conversations, relationships between classmates that grow over the years or a moment of prayer in a time of crisis. The students who most invest themselves into this kind of community soon find themselves impacted as much as they had intended to help those around them.”

That, in turn, often leads students to an even deeper commitment to a love of God and a love of learning.

Trennis Henderson is vice president for communications at Ouachita Baptist University.

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**Who:** Limited to the first 30 participants who register!!!  
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Bible Storying Workshop  
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## CONFERENCE

continued from page 10

Arkansas Baptist Children’s Homes (ABCHomes). New serves as chair of the Behavioral Sciences Department and professor of psychology and counseling at Central Baptist College in Conway. Brown is a family counselor

for ABCHomes.

“The conference is really for health-care professionals who need continuing education credit in counseling areas throughout our wide range of professions,” said Danny Hays, dean of the Pruet School of Christian Studies. “Then, it’s also for pastors and other church staff who are involved in counseling. There are some sessions directed to help them to improve on what’s most recent and current in the areas of counseling.”

Along with professionals and pastors, the conference is open to spouses of participants and full-time college students.

The conference begins at 8 a.m. and features two group sessions. Counseling track participants have the opportunity to attend breakout sessions of their choice in the afternoon.

For more information, contact Tracey Knight in Ouachita’s Pruet School of Christian Studies at 870-245-5599 or [knightte@obu.edu](mailto:knightte@obu.edu).

**Grace Fellowship Scholarship**

Grace Fellowship Scholarship is available to students attending or planning to attend Ouachita Baptist University or Williams Baptist College, having experienced the loss of a parent or parents by death or abandonment after infancy, and are preparing for a Christian vocation.

Applications are on the Arkansas Baptist Foundation website at [www.abf.org](http://www.abf.org). For questions, email [info@abf.org](mailto:info@abf.org) or call 501-376-4791.



## Obituaries

**Russell K. Hunt**, 92, of Neosho, Mo., died Feb. 9, following a brief illness.

Hunt, formerly of Harrison, served in the U.S. military from 1943 to 1946.

He served as pastor to several churches in Arkansas, including Chickasaw Baptist Church, McGehee; First Baptist Church, Altheimer; First Baptist Church, Marshall; and First Baptist Church, Batesville.

Hunt was a member of First Baptist Church in Neosho. He is preceded in death by his wife Florence and a grandson. He is survived by three sons, two daughters, a brother, a sister, nine grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren.

Funeral services were held Feb. 18 at Grubb Springs Baptist Church near Harrison. Interment followed in the Grubb Springs Cemetery near Harrison.

## Church life

**Calvary Baptist Church, Little Rock**, will celebrate its 80th anniversary April 2. Ed Simpson, former pastor, will be the guest speaker.

**Calvary Baptist Church in Searcy** will hold revival serv-

es on April 23-26 with evangelist C. W. Blood. Sunday services are 10:50 a.m. and 6 p.m. Weekday services begin at 7 p.m.

**Immanuel Baptist Church, Little Rock**, will host its annual wild game dinner at 6 p.m., Tuesday, March 7. Guest speakers are Bob Snell and Archie Mason from boomtime.tv. For more information, contact the church at 501-376-3071.

**Tumbling Shoals Baptist Church, Tumbling Shoals**, will host its annual wild game supper at 6:30 p.m., Thursday, March 9. The speaker for the event is Steve "Wildman" Wilson, host of The Call of the Wild weekend radio show. For more information, call the church at 501-362-3987.

## On the move

**Lee McGlone** is serving as intentional interim pastor at Calvary Baptist Church in Little Rock.



# 5-to-1 conference Feb. 23 at WBC

**WALNUT RIDGE** – Williams Baptist College (WBC) will host its annual 5-to-1 Student Ministry Conference from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., Thursday, Feb. 23. The event will focus on various aspects of student ministry and discipleship.

Event speakers and topics include: Steven Price, student pastor at First Baptist Church, Monticello, discussing student ministry with special needs youth; Bill Newton, youth minister at First Baptist Church, Hot

Springs, discussing student discipleship; Warren Gasaway, a member of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention church health team, discussing student evangelism, and Hayes Howell, campus minister at WBC, discussing preparing students for college.

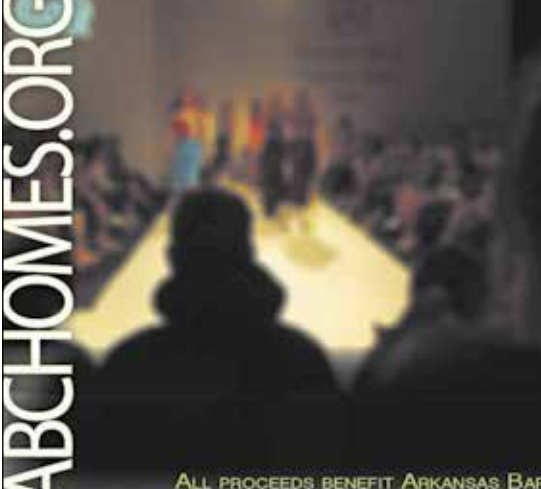
The conference will be held in the Moody Room of WBC's Mabee-Gwinup Cafeteria.

There is no cost to attend, and lunch will be provided. All are welcome.

WBC's 5-to-1 Student Ministry Conference seeks to equip churches and families with information and skills so teens can be surrounded with many caring adults who will help them develop lifelong faith.



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# Classifieds

## PASTOR

Spradling Baptist Church, Fort Smith, is looking for a **senior pastor**. Please send resume and references to Spradling Baptist Church, Pastor Search Committee, 3515 North 50th Street, Fort Smith, AR 72904.

River Road Baptist Church seeking interim **bi-vocational pastor**. Please send resume to: river013@centurytel.net or River Road Baptist Church, P O Box 161, Redfield, AR 72132.

Growing Southern Baptist church in Jonesboro, AR seeking **full-time pastor**. Please visit [www.southcarawaybaptistchurch.com](http://www.southcarawaybaptistchurch.com) for more information.

Witt's Chapel Baptist Church of Maynard, AR, seeking **full-time pastor**. Please send resume including references to: Dennis Barber 486 Thompson Road, Maynard, AR. 72444.

First Baptist Church Barling, AR. 72923 seeking a **bi-vocational pastor**. Parsonage is available. Email resume to [fbcbarling@aol.com](mailto:fbcbarling@aol.com).

Cocklebur Baptist Church, Ward, AR is prayerfully seeking a **bi-vocational pastor**. Parsonage is available. Accepting resumes through April 30, 2017. Email resume to [PastorResumeCBC@gmail.com](mailto:PastorResumeCBC@gmail.com) or mail to 4138 Cocklebur Rd, Ward, AR 72176.

Wonderful opportunity for an existing pastor who is being led by God to make a move. First Baptist Church Dexter, MO has a call for a **senior pastor** who supports the Baptist Faith and Message 2000. We have an average Sunday morning attendance of 450+, budget of \$1.35 million, and no debt. Please visit us at our website and learn more about our church and staff. Interested applicants can apply: [www.fbcdexter.org](http://www.fbcdexter.org) or [pastorsearchfbcdexter@gmail.com](mailto:pastorsearchfbcdexter@gmail.com). Applications will be reviewed as received and accepted until position is filled.

## OTHER STAFF POSITIONS

The Faulkner Baptist Association is receiving resumes for the position of **director of missions**. The former director, Dr. Larry White, has resigned to re-enter the pastorate. Send all resumes to [donc@conwaycentralchurch.org](mailto:donc@conwaycentralchurch.org). Deadline for receiving resumes is March 1.

**Full-time youth/student pastor** FBC Pea Ridge, Arkansas. Also, provides support to discipleship ministries in coordination with the Sr. Pastor. Email resume to [al@prfbc.org](mailto:al@prfbc.org).

Southside BC, Paris, seeks a **FT or PT worship leader**. Must be able to lead a blended worship service. Ability to lead and work with

praise band and choir is required. Send resume to [billy@ssbchurch.org](mailto:billy@ssbchurch.org).

Christian group home for teenage boys seeks **house parents**. Paid position includes rent, utilities, and groceries. For more information contact Amy Holt at 870-892-5588 or [info@bridgeofhopemina.com](mailto:info@bridgeofhopemina.com). You may send resumes to Bridge of Hope, PO Box 821, Pocahontas, AR 72455.

Bayou Meto Baptist, Jacksonville, seeks a **part-time children's minister**. Contact 501-988-1966.

First Baptist Church, Mountain View, Arkansas, seeking **part-time music and worship minister**, interim or permanent. Prefer 10-15 years experience for permanent position. Comfortable with variety of music, choral directing, and technology. Send resume to [searchteam@fbcmountainview.org](mailto:searchteam@fbcmountainview.org).

The Bartholomew Baptist Association is accepting resumes for the **associational missionary** position. Send all resumes to [bartholomewbaptist@yahoo.com](mailto:bartholomewbaptist@yahoo.com). Deadline for resumes is February 28.

FBC, DeWitt is searching for the **man God has to lead our music and youth ministries**. This is a F/T opportunity. Submit resumes by March 1 to [office@fbcdewitt.com](mailto:office@fbcdewitt.com) ATTN: Personnel Committee.

Hickory Creek Baptist Church in Lowell seeks **bi-vocational youth leader**. Resume to [jstuckey@jv.com](mailto:jstuckey@jv.com).

FBC Lockesburg is seeking a **part-time music minister**. Please send resume to [mayer4316@gmail.com](mailto:mayer4316@gmail.com).

FBC Dardanelle is seeking a **worship leader, part-time or full-time** with other duties. Send resume to [fbcdardanelle@gmail.com](mailto:fbcdardanelle@gmail.com).

FBC in Star City, AR is seeking a **full-time youth pastor**. Responsible for planning and overseeing all ministries related to 6th – 12th grade students. Contact: [firstbaptiststarcity@gmail.com](mailto:firstbaptiststarcity@gmail.com).

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

FBC West Fork seeking **part-time worship leader** – send resume and questions to [westforkfbc@yahoo.com](mailto:westforkfbc@yahoo.com).

FBC West Fork seeking **full-time student minister**. Send resumes or questions to [westforkfbc@yahoo.com](mailto:westforkfbc@yahoo.com).

First Baptist, Mansfield, MO, is seeking **bi-**

**vocational youth pastor** for growing youth group. Contact us at [firstbaptist618@centurytel.net](mailto:firstbaptist618@centurytel.net) or 417-924-3306.

East End Baptist Church is seeking a **bi-vocational worship leader**. Responsibilities will include leading music in Sunday morning and evening services and leading the choir. Contact the church at 4701 East End Road, Hensley, AR 72065 or by emailing [pastor@eeb-car.com](mailto:pastor@eeb-car.com).

Small church in southeast Arkansas is seeking a **music leader** for Sunday morning worship. Contact Larry Toller, pastor, at 870-413-1938.

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](mailto:jmorris.ubc@gmail.com).

Small church needs **music director**. Sundays only. Contact [sulliglienda@yahoo.com](mailto:sulliglienda@yahoo.com) if interested.

Bear Creek Springs Baptist Church is seeking a **full-time student pastor**. Those interested should send a resume to Bear Creek Springs Baptist Church, Attn: Senior Pastor, 179 Devito Loop, Harrison, AR 72601.

**Looking to fill a staff position at your church?**

Visit [arkansasbaptist.org/ad](http://arkansasbaptist.org/ad) to submit your classified!



# DR leaders mark 50 years of ministry, eye future

DENTON, Texas (BP) – Southern Baptist disaster relief (SBDR) leaders throughout North America met for their annual round table meeting and to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the founding of SBDR.

Representatives from nearly all the state Baptist conven-

tions participated in the Jan. 23-27 event at Camp Copass in Denton, Texas. Portions of the week focused on celebrating five decades of ministry efforts, looking at the present state of the ministry and preparing for the future.

"Fifty years represents a significant event for us," said

Mickey Caison, the executive director of SBDR at the North American Mission Board.

"Over those 50 years, we've responded to thousands of disasters, both domestically and internationally," he said. "As part of that, we've seen thousands of people come to Christ out of that environment of

damage and destruction. As we move through that process, we're able to see people come to faith. Because there were no Southern Baptist churches in their community, there was an opportunity for our associations and state conventions to start churches."

On Jan. 23, the group heard from Bob Dixon and John Lanoue, who participated in the first SBDR response following Hurricane Beulah in 1967. Using campcraft skills from the Royal Ambassadors ministry, the men turned one-gallon cans into miniature stoves (called Buddy Burners) to prepare hot meals for people impacted by that year's most intense hurricane.

"It's a great reminder of the faithfulness of those who started the work and the faithfulness of those who have continued the work for a very long time," said Gaylon Moss, disaster relief coordinator for North Carolina Baptists.

Roundtable participants also spent significant time debriefing the past year's major deployments, including two major flood events in Louisiana and last fall's response following Hurricane Matthew. NAMB and state leaders discussed how responses can improve from those experiences.

The group also discussed ways to involve more Southern Baptists in training events.

"We looked at the need for more online training and 'just-in-time' training," Caison said. "Not a lot of volunteers are willing to give you a whole weekend to get away and be

a part of a training event. If they're not going to do it that way, how are we going to get the training material, safety material and those kinds of things in their hands?"

Sam Porter, the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma's state disaster relief director, said SBDR has left a legacy among Southern Baptists in mobilizing a wide variety of volunteers for gospel work.

"It is a unique vehicle for people with Christ in their hearts and a passion to serve others that is set on 'go' whenever the world falls apart in some place," Porter said. "It especially gives opportunities

to those who may not feel confidence about their knowledge of the Bible or they don't do well singing. Even though we all know they do, they may

not feel like they have something to give. When they get to use their God-given gifts or their learned talents in disaster relief tasks, like using a chainsaw or cooking, they realize those abilities can be used greatly to impact the world for Christ and set up the opportunity for someone to hear the gospel."

Yet Porter and other SBDR leaders acknowledged that for the ministry to be most effective, Southern Baptists must mobilize new generations of leaders.

"The volunteer pool we have is beginning to age out," Caison said. "We're looking at how we better engage gen X and millennials in the ministry."





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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)

## SBC pastors minister to Muslims amid travel worries

DEARBORN, Mich. (BP) – Southern Baptist pastors will continue attempts to build friendships in Dearborn, Mich., among the sizable Muslim community, despite the fear pastors say President Donald Trump's now suspended travel ban has generated among immigrants there.

Monthly, pastors Dave Ferraro and Carlos Liese gather small groups of volunteers and eat at restaurants Muslims frequent, starting conversations that lead to discussions of religious beliefs. Their outreach is in Dearborn, where one-third of residents claim Arab-American heritage but are not necessarily Muslim, according to the Arab American Institute in Washington, D.C.

"I think the need is just that [Muslims] would continue to learn that Christians love them," Ferraro, pastor of discipleship at Merriman Road Baptist Church in Garden City, told Baptist Press. "We just seek to let them know that we love them regardless of their immigration status. There's certainly some fear that's there, so we just try to dispel that by imbib-

ing the truth and showing them Christian love."

The most recent outreach was Feb. 17 and drew several evangelism volunteers who were coached in proper technique before the outing.

"The only way that lie [of hatred] is dispelled that Satan wants to perpetuate is if Christians go out and just meet with people face to face," Ferraro said, "and seek to demonstrate the love of Christ to them, that they're important, they're valued and maybe misguided in the truth, but that's part of our mission to love on them and point them to the truth."

At issue is an executive order Trump issued Jan. 27 temporarily suspending travel from seven majority Muslim nations for 90 days and banning refugees from Syria indefinitely. Federal district Judge James L. Robart of Seattle suspended the ban Feb. 3 and the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals upheld Robart's ruling days later.

Matthew Vroman, a pastor who is building a friendship with a leading imam (Muslim leader) in the community, cautions Christians against men-



Michigan Southern Baptist pastors Carlos Liese (second from left) and Dave Ferraro (far right) build friendships with Muslims in Dearborn, Mich., with hopes of sharing the gospel. In this April 2016 photo, the pastors are at a mosque with a Muslim worshipper and two imams. BP photo

tioning politics when interacting with Muslims in the U.S.

"If you're going to be effective reaching Muslims," Vroman said, "you keep it gospel-centric. And maybe if you [support] the refugee ban ... you'd better not be advertising that, or you won't have much Muslim ministry."

Muslims think the ban was "completely against Islam and Muslims," Vroman said. "It's very scary for them, definitely.... They're waiting to be rounded up and sent home," regardless of their immigra-

tion or citizenship status. "They feel on the defense and scared."

Vroman, pastor of Eastside Community Church in Harper Woods, is building a friendship with Imam Muhammad Ali Elahi, leader of the Islamic House of Wisdom in Dearborn Heights. The *Detroit Free Press* reported that Elahi described the refugee ban as lacking "common sense" during a Feb. 1 press conference at his mosque and is the "greatest gift for ISIS [the Islamic State]" because it further alienates the

U.S. from foreign countries.

Liese, Vroman's partner in the evangelistic outreach who pastors Good Shepherd Baptist Church of Lansing, said, "In all the years that we have been doing this we have been able to share the gospel with many people, so many seeds have been sown, and we have never been mistreated or disrespected, ever." The outreach has done "a lot of seed planting and people have been very, very receptive. Our experience has been nothing but positive."

## Florist looks to Supreme Court for religious liberty

OLYMPIA, Wash. (BP) – Washington florist Barronelle Stutzman has lost her appeal of a ruling declaring she cannot refuse business that violates her religious beliefs.

On Feb. 16 the Washington Supreme Court upheld a lower court ruling convicting Stutzman of violating the federal and state civil rights of Robert Ingersoll and Curt Freed when she refused to design floral arrangements for their homosexual wedding nearly four years ago.

The Southern Baptist grandmother remains liable for the plaintiffs' attorney fees and damages but will appeal the decision to the U.S. Supreme Court, her defense team from the Alliance Defending Free-

dom (ADF) reported.

"It's wrong for the state to force any citizen to support a particular view about marriage or anything else against their will," ADF senior counsel Kristen Waggoner said in a press release after the decision was announced. "Freedom of speech and religion aren't subject to the whim of a majority; they are constitutional guarantees."

Russell Moore, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, called the ruling a loss for every American who values liberty and civility.

"The Washington Supreme Court's ruling shortchanges our nation's most fundamen-

tal freedom in favor of ideological conformity," Moore said. "Barronelle Stutzman followed her genuinely held beliefs without hostility toward any, and yet finds herself the target of a government that wants to steamroll her constitutional rights."

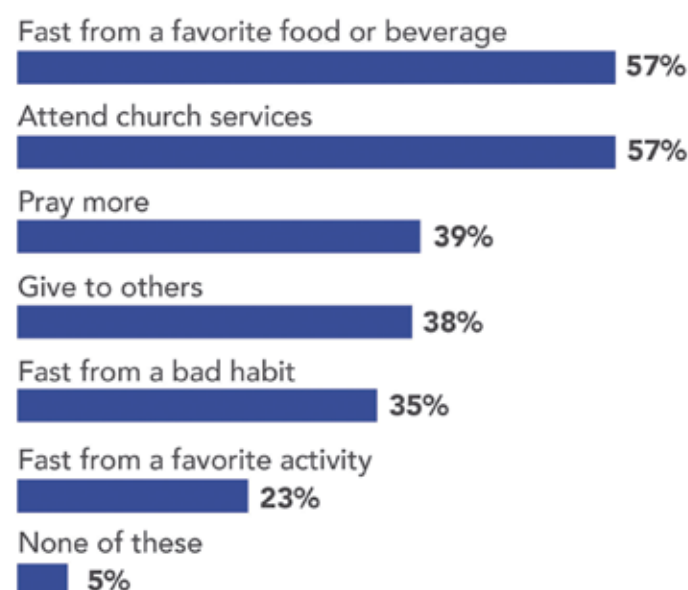
"The court held that the government can force citizens to use their creative gifts and expressive speech to participate in and endorse acts they believe to be immoral," Moore said. "My prayer is that this ruling would be overturned and that the U.S. Supreme Court would recognize the crucial importance of religious liberty."

The case "is about crushing dissent," said Waggoner. "In a free America, people with differing beliefs must have room to coexist."



Stutzman

### Among Americans who observe Lent How do you typically observe Lent?



Note: Respondents could select all that apply.



MARCH 5, 2017

“Because I am your mother – that’s why!”

If you’ve not spoken this before, you’ve most likely heard it in your lifetime. Through the years the personal gravity of this phrase has intensified. This was my response, sometimes in frustration, to the many questions and challenges of a child. It has also been in my quiet, desperate utterance of prayers for my teenagers to follow after God’s righteousness. Now, as they launch into adulthood, I desire that these words continually echo in their minds and hearts – that I will never stop loving them, supporting them, praying for them, desiring God’s best for them ... “because I will always be their mom – that’s why!”

I come by this naturally, as do many of you. But, we live in a broken world, with broken people who have never heard these words from earthly parents. An intimate encounter with Christ would change their lives, restor-

ing a right relationship with the perfect Father, a relationship that is incomparable to human relationships. The Bible contains God’s story of love and redemption, grace and truth. Through all of history (His story), we see a crimson thread of forgiveness offered through the shedding of blood.

In response to Adam and Eve’s sin, God responded with

the promise of the One who would crush the head of Satan. At Jesus’ baptism, God’s voice from heaven confirmed His relationship with His Son. Upon Jesus’ death, the veil in the holy of holies was torn in two, from top to bottom, providing direct access to the Father through the sacrifice of

the Son.

It is only in understanding the brokenness that results from sin that each of us can know the Father through the Son. And, He is calling us to lay aside anything that points to ourselves and, instead, to make His name known!

### EXPLORE THE BIBLE Who is Jesus?

MATTHEW 16:13-28



Susie Thompson  
Greenwood

### BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE Jesus, our victor

REVELATION 1:12-20



Jeff Thompson  
Greenwood

changers in the Temple.

Maybe you see Jesus on Palm Sunday riding into Jerusalem while a cheering throng crowded the streets. It could be that you see Jesus, the Suffering Servant, from Isaiah 53, beaten, flogged, humiliated, crucified and hanging on the cross. There is nothing wrong with any of these images of Jesus. Likewise, there is nothing wrong with any of the hundreds of other mental pictures we can imagine based on what Scripture tells us.

But, for just a moment, consider this. Those are all pictures of how Jesus looked and acted when He walked this earth during His first advent. Jesus put on human flesh the first time about 2,000 years ago – to be the Lamb of God, the sinless, perfect sacrifice that paid for the sin of all the world. John is showing us a picture of what Jesus looks like now and forevermore. The risen, living Lion of Judah is the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords.

MARCH 12, 2017

As American believers, many of us feel that our heads are spinning as we look at a society none of us have known before or even dreamed would ever exist. It is a time of false news, public accusations, attacks on beliefs, immorality and reactionary rhetoric. Friends, we only need to look at Scripture to realize we don’t know the half of it.

Imagine watching the events prior to and following the Transfiguration we read about in Matthew 17. Jesus and the disciples were in the area around Caesarea Philippi, the center of worship for Baal, Greek gods and Caesar. Jesus’ own disciples were still unsure if He really was who He said He was, especially as they saw the challenges and trickery of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Jesus had just warned the disciples that He was about to suffer and die ... and leave them. Though we know the end of the story – the resurrected Christ who offers us victory over death and the coming of the Holy Spirit – the disciples had

not yet experienced it. They could only understand that they would be left all alone.

What we learn from Christ in this passage provides us the assurance, confidence and example of how to respond to critics and questions. Throughout Scripture, we have seen God weave His redemptive story.

We know Jesus as the only Way, Truth and Life. In following Him, we fulfill our purpose of becoming like Him and making Him known. Here is how we do that: 1) We see Him for Who He is, God’s beloved Son, 2) We listen to Him, 3) We trust Him, His purposes and plans, without fear, 4) We tell others

about Him and 5) We glorify the Father with every thought, word, action and motive.

The world is watching. The world is hungry for truth. The world needs believers who consistently, with integrity, point to the Father through words and actions that reveal His love!

### EXPLORE THE BIBLE Is Jesus fully God?

MATTHEW 17:1-13



Susie Thompson  
Greenwood

Hebrews defines faith: “Now faith is the reality of what is hoped for, the proof of what is not seen” (Heb. 11:1, HCSB). Faith is reality. That is what Jesus saw in the Roman centurion.

This Gentile soldier knew Jesus was in total command of everything and everyone. What we rely on reveals our true faith. The centurion relied on Jesus, and so for him Jesus’ word was enough. Our actions reveal whom, or what, we rely upon; they show where we have placed our faith.

In the 1950s when the first skyscrapers were built with glass walls, office workers were scared to work. They were hundreds of feet off the ground with nothing visible to keep them from plummeting to their deaths. Intellectually, they knew there was glass in the window to keep them safe. However, their actions told a different story as they crept around at work too terrified and pre-occupied with falling to accomplish anything.

At one such building the workers

called in a structural engineer. The engineer showed everyone the building specifications and explained how the thick glass was better than brick and mortar. He could tell his words had little effect on calming the employees’ fear. After giving it some thought, he said, “I have an idea – everyone back up against the inside wall.” When everyone was safely standing with their backs to the wall, the engineer ran toward the glass window at full speed. He hurled himself against the glass with a thud and bounced back on the floor. Standing up, he lifted his hands in the air and said, “See, I’m fine.”

Everyone had the same hope about the safety of the glass as a barrier. Only the engineer had faith in the reality of that hope. His actions proved his faith. That is why James wrote, “Faith without works is dead” (James 2:26, HCSB). True faith shows in our actions and brings about the reality of hope.

### BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE Victorious hope

MATTHEW 8:5-13



Jeff Thompson  
Greenwood



# Texas blocked from defunding Planned Parenthood

WASHINGTON (BP) – Texas is the latest state to suffer a judicial setback in its effort to eliminate government funds for Planned Parenthood.

Federal Judge Sam Sparks of Austin, in a Feb. 21 ruling, blocked enforcement of a December decision by the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) to disqualify Planned Parenthood affiliates from participation in the state's Medicaid program. State Attorney General Ken Paxton promised to appeal Sparks' opinion.

With the decision, Texas becomes at least the sixth state recently to be thwarted in the attempt to remove the country's No. 1 abortion provider from its Medicaid program. Courts also have ruled against similar efforts by Arkansas, Alabama, Kansas, Louisiana and Mississippi.

A Texas Baptist leader expressed disappointment in the ruling in support of a scandal-plagued organization that performs about 300,000 abortions annually nationwide and receives more than \$500 million a year in government

grants and reimbursements.

"Planned Parenthood wouldn't be in business if they couldn't do abortions," said Jim Richards, executive director of the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention.

"They are more committed to abortion than they are to women's health."

"Planned Parenthood clinics don't do prenatal care or mammograms, contrary to popular understanding," Richards said in written comments. "Public funding should instead be given to actual women's health providers."

The HHSC move to terminate Planned Parenthood's participation in Medicaid followed the release of undercover videos in 2015 providing evidence that at least some of its affiliates were trading in body parts from aborted babies. The secretly recorded videos showed various Planned Parenthood executives across the country discussing their sale of fetal parts as well as their

willingness to manipulate the lethal procedure to preserve organs for sale and use.

In his opinion, however, Sparks said HHSC Inspector General Stuart Bowen disqualified Planned Parenthood in December minus "any evidence indicating an actual program violation warranting termination."

Bowen's reliance on the

search, the judge wrote.

Planned Parenthood proved it has a "substantial likelihood of success" in the case, thereby demonstrating it is entitled to a preliminary injunction against the state, Sparks said.

Sparks' opinion came only four weeks after another undercover investigation refuted Planned Parenthood's assertion it provides prenatal care

as a primary service. The pro-life organization Live Action reported its special investigators requesting prenatal care were turned away by 92 of the 97 Planned

Parenthood centers they contacted.

In promising to appeal, Paxton said Sparks' opinion "flies in the face of basic human decency."

"The raw, unedited footage from undercover videos exposed a brazen willingness by Planned Parenthood officials to traffic in fetal body parts, as well as manipulate the timing and method of an abortion," Paxton said in a written state-

ment. "No taxpayer in Texas should have to subsidize this repugnant and illegal conduct."

Cecile Richards, president of the Planned Parenthood Federation of America, said, "We will never back down, and we will never stop fighting for our patients," *The New York Times* reported.

The court fight in Texas comes as Congress seeks to cut federal funding for Planned Parenthood and to protect the right of states to withhold money for the organization.

Congress is threatening to use the reconciliation process to cut about 90 percent of Planned Parenthood's federal funding and direct it to federally qualified health centers that do not perform abortions. A reconciliation bill enables the Senate to approve a budget-related measure with a simple majority rather than the 60 votes required to overcome a filibuster. Both the Senate and House passed such a reconciliation proposal last year, but President Obama vetoed the bill.



video of conversations between undercover investigators and a Planned Parenthood Gulf Coast (PPGC) official provided no evidence of wrongdoing by the Houston-area affiliate of the national organization, Sparks said. Evidence was lacking that Planned Parenthood altered abortion procedures for research purposes, aborted babies to procure tissue for its own research and profited from obtaining tissue for re-

# Trump transgender bathroom reversal anticipated

WASHINGTON (BP) – A letter is imminent from the Trump administration advising schools they are no longer encouraged to let transgender students use bathrooms and locker rooms corresponding to their perceived gender identity, the *Washington Post* reported Feb. 21.

The U.S. Departments of Justice and Education are expected to issue a letter Feb. 22 to schools across the nation reversing federal guidelines issued under the Obama administration, the *Post* said, based on a two-page draft of the letter the newspaper said it has obtained.

While the Obama administration's May 2016 directive was nonbinding, it implied that noncompliant schools might lose federal aid. After many states complained, a federal judge put a hold on the 2016 directive in August, but the issue had already made it to the court system.

The Trump letter as drafted promises "to withdraw

and rescind the above-referenced guidance documents in order to further consider the legal issues involved," according to the *Post*. The letter is described as citing "the significant litigation" that the Obama directive inspired, and noting school officials and the public had "struggled to understand and apply the statements of [the Obama] policy."

Southern Baptists including ethicist Russell Moore had opposed Obama's directive.

"The (Obama) White House's directive is an example of overreach, one that goes far beyond protecting persons from discrimination," Moore, president of the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, has said. "Children should never be used as pawns of the state in a culture war. My prayer is that this directive would be overturned, and that the federal government would cease its attack on conscience and communities."

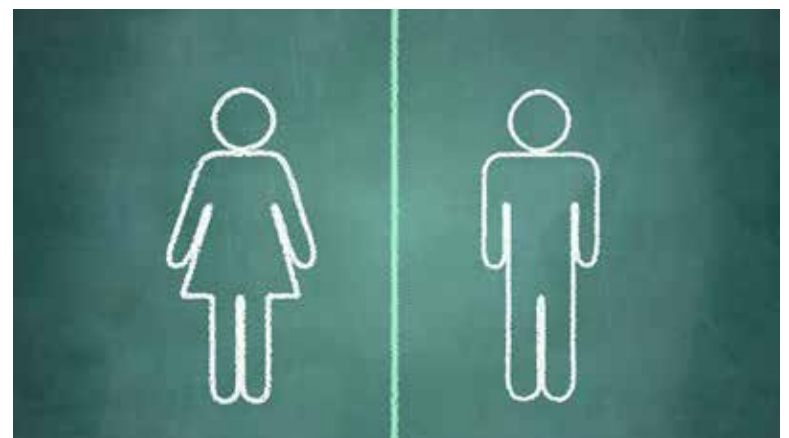
White House spokesman

Sean Spicer acknowledged in a Feb. 21 press briefing that the Education and Justice departments were addressing the issue.

"Right now that's an issue that the Department of Justice [DOJ] and the Department of Education are addressing," Spicer said, according to the press briefing transcript at [whitehouse.gov](http://whitehouse.gov). "I would tell you that – and I think that there will be further guidance coming from DOJ in particular with respect to not just the executive order, but also the case that's in front of the Supreme Court."

The U.S. Supreme Court is scheduled on March 28 to hear a case from the Gloucester County School Board in Virginia challenging a lower court ruling allowing transgender teen Gavin Grimm to use the boy's bathroom at school. Grimm, a biological female, identifies as male.

The Trump administration considers under the purview of the states the issue of trans-



BP photo

gender bathroom use, Spicer said.

"The president has maintained for a long time that this is a states' rights issue and not one for the federal government," Spicer said. "So while there will be further guidance coming out on this, I think that all you have to do is look at what the president's view has been for a long time – that this is not something that the federal government should be involved in; this is a states' rights issue."

In North Carolina, the legislature has passed the Public Facilities Privacy and Security Act requiring individuals in government buildings to use the restrooms of the sex on their birth certificates rather than of their gender identity.

A similar bill was introduced in Texas in January requiring government buildings to designate bathroom use based on biological gender. At least 13 other states have filed similar bills, *World News* reported Feb. 20.



# Arkansas Baptist News Reach 50,000 Loyal, Faith-Based Readers!

## Williams Baptist College: The dream

**Eight Counties**  
Williams Baptist College

**WALNUT RIDGE** - Logically, it never should have worked.

The country was still cleaving its way back from the Great Depression. The region had seen one Baptist school after another close its doors. Yet, a young pastor, all of 28 years old, had a dream.

"It is nothing less than introducing the WBC will soon have turned for 75 years. A lot of people didn't think it would last a year," reflected Steve Williams, whose father, H.E. Williams, was that young pastor.

Indeed, the shining college that now bears the

Williams name celebrates its diamond anniversary in 2016. Its 75-year history is marked by remarkable progress, rooted in divine guidance and providence.

It was 1941 when Williams, pastor of First Baptist Church of Four Seasons, rallied supporters to begin a new work called Southern Baptist College (SBC). It started in September of that year with 42 students enrolled.

"When the Lord spoke to him, he was faithful to let the Holy Spirit guide him. When the Lord placed on his heart a vision and a need for a Christian college in northern Arkansas and southeast Missouri, he did not let opposition stop him," said Jim Williams, also a son of the founder.

Looking back over Williams' legacy of other Baptist schools, including Maywood Academy, Mountain Home Baptist College, and others.

"He felt led, despite the hard efforts, to try, yet again, and Christian higher education of grace. He was faithful to his encouragement of alumni at previous Baptist schools," said academic dean and historian, J. Lee.

### ABN NEWS

Telling the story of Arkansas Baptists since 1901

Volume 115, Number 23

**Inside:**

- Highly Praiseful and Inspiring by 5
- 2016 at a Glance: 50th Anniversary
- Anniversary of Baptist College's 75th Year
- Y'all and the Year of 2016: A look at the year in review
- Local News offering good news to all

**Williams turns 75**

WBC celebrates 75 years of Christian higher education

Special section

November 17, 2016

## Williams celebrates homecoming

**WALNUT RIDGE** - Williams Baptist College (WBC) observed homecoming on Nov. 5, with alumni and friends participating in numerous activities and festivities, including the culmination of WBC's 75th anniversary celebration.

Williams hosted three alumni during homecoming festivities. James Costner, a 1963 WBC graduate, of Nashville, Tenn., was presented this year's Distinguished Alumni Award, and Bobo (WBC class of 2005) and Amber (WBC class of 2003) Newton of Tulsa, Okla., were honored as the year's Outstanding Young Alumni.

The awards presentation event also featured performances by the Williams Singers and The Cadets, as well as a presentation on the history of the college and recognition of the Phi Beta Lambda hus-

band. Williams also presented three alumni during homecoming festivities. James Costner, a 1963 WBC graduate, of Nashville, Tenn., was presented this year's Distinguished Alumni Award, and Bobo (WBC class of 2005) and Amber (WBC class of 2003) Newton of Tulsa, Okla., were honored as the year's Outstanding Young Alumni.

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## Trump elected; Ark. voters approve 'medical marijuana'

**IN WHAT IS BEING** called one of the most stunning upsets in U.S. political history, celebrity businessman and potter-elect Donald J. Trump was elected America's 45th president Tuesday, Nov. 8.

Under the amendment, the Arkansas Department of Health will issue registration cards to qualifying patients while the Alcoholic Beverage Control Division will oversee the dispensaries and growing facilities.

After approval from their doctors, patients will be able to obtain up to 2.5 ounces of marijuana from a dispensary every two weeks. Olanicoma, a cancer, post-traumatic stress disorder and Alzheimer's disease are some of the "qualified medical conditions" listed in the amendment. Arkansas is the 26th state to legalize medical marijuana.

Larry Page, executive director of the Arkansas Faith and Ethics Council, reacted to the vote by Arkansians to approve medical marijuana.

"The passage of Issue Six was disappointing but not totally unexpected. We began our opposition to Issue Six some 20 points down in the polls, and over the course of the campaign we closed this gap," Page said in an email to the Arkansas Baptist News. "However, we couldn't get it

## Ark. churches among fastest growing

**CENTRAL BAPTIST** Church in Jonesboro was named the second fastest growing Southern Baptist church in the U.S. in 2016. Central Baptist Church reported a 30 percent growth of 958 in its attendance of 4,203.

The list of 100 fastest growing and largest participating churches was compiled annually in collaboration between Outreach magazine and LifeWay Research.

Also in the National State, The Summit Church of North Little Rock, the pastorate of Bill Bluff, ranks number 94 among one nation's fastest growing churches, recording a 19 percent growth of 262 in its average attendance of 1,610.

Among largest participating churches, Cross Church in Springdale, the pastorate of immediate past Southern Baptist Convention president Ronnie Floyd, ranked number 45 with 9,033 in average attendance.

In the self-reported survey, LifeWay Research surveys 27,000 churches for information, verifies the numbers, calculates the trends and compiles the lists. In turn, Outreach interviews many pastors and writes features profiling churches and leaders.

See GROWING page 7

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