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## 37 saved at 'Day in Delta'

Centennial Association, local churches make a difference  
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A Centennial Baptist Association volunteer makes balloon art for a girl during a block party, which was part of the association's "Day in the Delta" mission day April 11. Centennial Baptist Association partnered with Second Baptist Church (Park Avenue), Helena-West Helena, to put on the event. See related story, Page 8. Photo by Tammy Albrecht

## DR responds in Arkansas and Oklahoma

ARKANSAS Baptist disaster relief (DR) teams were deployed to southwest Arkansas and parts of Oklahoma in the aftermath of storms that swept through the state on May 10.

Two people were killed in a mobile home park in Nashville when a possible tornado passed through the region. Two other residents of the park were critically injured during the storm, according to media reports.

Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC) missions team member Michelle Hendrix said disaster relief teams were sent May 11 to aid areas affected by the storms.

"We have deployed assessors, a chaplain, Arkansas Valley Baptist Association skid steer and Nashville and Southwest Arkansas Baptist Association recovery teams," Hendrix

said in an email to ABSC staff.

Much of the state remained under a flash flood watch for several days following the storms. Entergy Arkansas reported that 8,000 Arkansans were without power, with most of the outages being in Columbia, Clay, Conway, Nevada, Pope and Saline counties, according to the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*.

Bob Brown, a member of Hot Springs Baptist Church, reported that his home on Treasure Isle in Lake Hamilton received more than 3 inches of rain during the storm, which caused the lake to rise nearly 3 feet. Brown said Treasure Isle, and other areas of the lake were impassable until the lake receded.

Brown also reported that Little Mazon Creek, south-

west of Hot Springs, was flooded and impassable.

The ABSC deployed five DR teams (Little River Baptist Association, Southwest Baptist Association, Arkansas Valley Baptist Association, Bartholomew Baptist Association and Centennial Baptist Association) to Nashville May

See **DR** page 2



## IMB opens door to new pathways for service

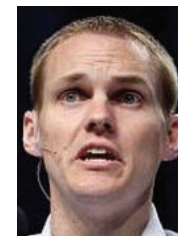
LOUISVILLE, Ky. – Citing urgency for reaching a lost world and unity with the Baptist Faith and Message, International Mission Board (IMB) trustees streamlined guidelines for appointing new personnel to fulfill their missionary calling at its May 12-13 trustee meeting in Louisville, Ky.

God is worthy of the worship of all people, yet billions have yet to hear the good news of the gospel, IMB President David Platt has reiterated to Southern Baptists since being elected in 2014. In February 2015, trustees approved a simplified structure with the goal of empowering limitless teams of missionaries to make disciples and multiply churches among unreached people, explained Platt.

Toward this end, the IMB aims to provide multiple pathways in which missionaries may serve on these teams, and each will involve specific qualifications, said Platt. The newly revised policy creates a unified statement of qualifications that will characterize every

missionary serving through any pathway created by IMB to mobilize Southern Baptists to share the gospel with unreached people.

"When you hear 'pathway,' think 'possibilities' – all the possible ways that people in the pews of Southern Baptist churches might serve overseas: as doctors, teachers, accountants, lawyers, fitness instructors, rickshaw drivers, students, retirees," Platt told trustees.



Platt

"We're talking about limitless possibilities that God has providentially arranged for His people to go around the world with the gospel. And as the IMB, we want to send Southern Baptists through as many pathways as possible, which necessitates that we open up the pipeline for people to come through those pathways."

Prior to the May board of trustees meeting, miscellaneous policies existed for career, apprentice, Journeyman, ISC and Masters program

See **IMB** page 2

## Horne leaves Ouachita for AICU post

ARKADELPHIA – Rex M. Horne Jr., 61, president of Ouachita Baptist University since 2006, has announced

his resignation as president effective this summer to serve as president of Arkansas' Independent Colleges and Universities (AICU). He succeeds Ouachita alumnus Rex Nelson, who has been named director of corporate communications for Simmons First National Corp.

"My nine-plus years at Ouachita have been very rewarding," Horne said. "I have been most impressed

by the work performed by our faculty and staff. The sense of calling and commitment to duty has been evident on the campus. Our students are difference-makers. I will treasure the time the Lord allowed me to serve here. Our prayers, continued interest and desire to help remain strong."



Horne

During his tenure as Ouachita's 15th president, Horne led efforts to strengthen the university's financial standing, including launching the Defining the Difference capital campaign. Other achievements include providing leadership for sever-

al significant improvements to the physical campus, including such major projects as the Student Village residence halls dedicated in 2009 and Cliff Harris Stadium dedicated in 2014.

Horne holds degrees from Lyon College, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Becky, are the parents of four adult children and have 11 grandchildren.

Prior to serving as president of Ouachita, Horne served 16 years as senior pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church in Little Rock.



## ABN Digest

Stories of interest  
to Arkansas Baptists

### Kansas pastor joins SBC officer slate

COLUMBUS, Ohio (BP) – Kansas Pastor Steve Dighton will be nominated for first vice president of the Southern Baptist Convention, Texas Pastor and former SBC President Jack Graham announced May 12. Dighton is senior pastoral advisor at the Kansas City-area Lenexa Baptist Church in Lenexa, Kan., a church he founded 25 years ago and where he served as senior pastor until this past spring. When Dighton founded Lenexa in 1990, the church had less than 100 members. It has since grown to more than 6,000. Dighton is the first announced nominee for first vice president. Ohio Pastor Cad Keck has been announced as a second vice presidential nominee. President Ronnie Floyd and Recording Secretary John Yeats both will be re-nominated.

### New GGBTS campus design ‘mission-focused’

MILL VALLEY, Calif. (BP) – Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary President Jeff Iorg presented building plans for both the new primary campus in Southern California and commuter campus in the San Francisco area would use a “mission-focused design scheme” to best utilize space in the new locations. Iorg gave a floor-by-floor overview of the campus in Ontario, Calif. Due to built-in design constraints, such as weight limitations, the library will be housed on the first and second floors. The campus in Fremont in the San Francisco area will be housed in a completely new building on land donated to the seminary by a church. The property is valued at \$2.9 million, Iorg said.

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

# Eureka Springs affirms LGBT ordinance

EUREKA SPRINGS – Voters in Eureka Springs decided in a special election May 12 to keep a controversial anti-discrimination ordinance passed by its city council in February.

The final vote tally was 579 votes for ratification of the ordinance and 231 against it. The special election was held specifically to allow residents to decide if the law should be repealed.

The Eureka Springs City Council passed Ordinance 2223 on Feb. 9 prohibiting the city and businesses from discriminating against a person based on their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Some Eureka Springs city leaders readily admitted passage of the ordinance banning discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) individuals was an effort to pre-eminently circumvent the Republican-controlled Arkansas Legislature. Eureka Springs Mayor Butch Berry promptly signed the or-

dinance into law once it was voted on Feb. 9.

While residents have now voted to keep the ordinance, it will become invalid once Act 137 – passed by the Arkansas Legislature as Senate Bill 202 – goes into effect July 1. Act 137, sponsored by Sen. Bart Hester, R-Cave Springs, bans future civil rights ordinances. The bill became law on Feb. 24 without Gov. Asa

Hutchinson’s signature.

In a related development, Mike Bishop was fired from his position as president and CEO of the Eureka Springs Chamber of Commerce in March a few days after the Chamber released a statement outlining its position on the Eureka Springs ordinance. Among the concerns listed were the fact that the Chamber had no knowledge of the

ordinance prior to its Feb. 9 passage, as well as unknown restrictions and regulations the ordinance could place on the city’s business owners, according to media reports.

“We did not support discrimination in any way, to anybody, in any group,” Bishop told a TV station. “It was very vague on how much effect it could have on local businesses.”

## DR

*continued from page one*

12. The teams did debris removal. They finished clearing their sites May 14.

“Our five teams did incredible work, completing over 50 jobs under the excellent servant leadership of Don Jones, associational missionary at Little River Baptist Association, and Joe Chaney, the lead unit leader,” said Randy Garrett, ABSC disaster relief director.

“As I drove around yesterday, I saw the cleanest disaster site I’ve ever seen.”

Garrett said DR teams have also been asked to assist Oklahoma teams in Tuttle, Okla., with heavy equipment. The Northwest Baptist Association and Tri-County Baptist Association are responding.

“This may be a long deployment because of the number of work orders,” Garrett said in an email. “As of last count, they had 853 jobs.”

Garrett added that Cross

Church in northwest Arkansas sent untrained volunteers to aid with cleanup in Oklahoma. The group joined two ABSC teams already in the state.

“Lots of faithful, hard working volunteers are sharing Christ’s ‘help, healing, and hope’ with those who so need it,” said Garrett.

Visit [arkansasbaptist.org](http://arkansasbaptist.org) for updates on recent storms. This story was compiled, in part, with *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* reports.

## IMB

*continued from page one*

missionary appointees. Specific policy regulations covered issues of faith and practice, such as levels of education, history of divorce, teenage children in the home, the practice of a private prayer language and greater specificity around baptism than the Baptist Faith and Message.

“As we look toward the future and the limitless number of missionaries we want to mobilize from Southern Baptist churches, we want to give Southern Baptists a simple, clear statement of qualifications that unifies not only the missionaries serving on one of those teams on the field, but unifies the IMB with the whole of the SBC,” Platt said, noting the revised policy serves as the unifying standard for all IMB missionaries, regardless of what role they might play on a team.

“To be as clear as possible, this is no lowering of the bar for potential IMB missionaries,” he said. “This is a raising of the bar in all the areas that matter most. ... We will continue to train our missionaries and work as missionaries in ways that faithfully represent

Southern Baptist churches and Southern Baptist conviction.”

The IMB will begin a process of implementing the revised policy – which opens the possibility for new sending pathways – in the days to come, said Sebastian Traeger, IMB executive vice president. (IMB Policy 200-1 is printed in

its entirety at the end of this article.)

### In other action:

– IMB trustees appointed 34 new missionaries to serve around the world, joining a total missionary force of approximately 4,800. The missionaries are being commis-

sioned during an appointment service at Highview Baptist Church in Louisville, Ky., on May 13.

The next IMB trustee meeting is Aug. 25-26 in Richmond, Va.. The next missionary appointment service is Aug. 26 at Spotswood Baptist Church in Fredericksburg, Va.

## IMB Policy 200-1

An IMB missionary is a disciple of Jesus set apart by the Holy Spirit, sent out from the church, and affirmed by the IMB to cross geographic, cultural, and/or linguistic barriers as part of a missionary team focused on making disciples and multiplying churches among unreached peoples and places. IMB exists to empower limitless teams of missionaries made up of different men, women, and families with distinct roles and responsibilities. IMB provides multiple pathways in which missionaries may serve on one of these teams, each of which carries unique qualifications. However, any IMB missionary serving through any pathway created by IMB leadership is required to meet the following qualifications:

### Spiritual qualifications

– Vibrant personal discipleship: As they abide in God’s Word and walk in step with God’s Spirit, IMB missionaries bear fruit of an intimate, growing relationship with Christ.

– Evident personal discipleship making: IMB missionaries are meaningfully involved in a local church in which they participate in leading people to faith in Christ, seeing new believers baptized in the church, and showing believers how to obey Christ, all with a view toward reaching the nations with the gospel.

– Call: The call to serve as an IMB missionary has been discerned within a local church and affirmed by that local church alongside IMB leadership.

– Commitment: IMB missionaries are devoted to the vision, mission, values,

and beliefs of the IMB.

### Southern Baptist identity

– Currently a baptized member of a Southern Baptist church.

– Commitment to and identification with Southern Baptists.

– Conviction of truth as expressed in the current Baptist Faith and Message statement of the Southern Baptist Convention.

### Health

Good physical, emotional, and mental health.

### Family

IMB missionaries model a godly family life and/or personal relationships.

### Citizenship

Service is open to U.S. citizens and permanent residents of the United States.



# Yvonne Rodgers 'born to be Mother of Year'

Jessica Vanderpool  
Arkansas Baptist News

DEWITT – Yvonne Rodgers, 77, was recognized officially as the *Arkansas Baptist News* (ABN) 2015 Mother of the Year during worship services May 3 at First Baptist Church, DeWitt, where she is a member.

"I have only known Ms. Yvonne for a couple of years, but she has proved to be a virtuous woman of God," said Pastor Jimmy Albrecht. "She takes care of her husband, Jimmie, who has many back and leg problems, and she does it without ever complaining. She always has a smile on her face and kind words to say to anyone who crosses her path, which of course many people do because they like to be encouraged!"

"She still teaches Sunday school – and has in many departments over the years. She stays current on events happening in Arkansas Baptist (life) because she has such a heart for missions," he said.

The ABN's annual Mother's Day contest asks readers to nominate mothers by submitting an essay.

Rodgers was nominated by her sister, Libbie Dougan, member of Immanuel Baptist

Church, Little Rock, who described Rodgers as "beautiful inside and out."

"Pretty much from birth, everyone knew that Yvonne was born to be 'The Mother of the Year,'" wrote Dougan. "For our large family, she took over a lot of the cooking and house-keeping. Plus, she helped care for 'the colicky baby' – me!"

Rodgers was the second of five children. Dougan was the youngest. Rodgers and her husband have two children – one of whom is adopted.

"Therefore, I really appreciate in a way I wouldn't otherwise how God loves us as His adopted children," Rodgers said.

Dougan wrote that Rodgers and her husband farmed for years. Their son, David, who is a deacon at First Baptist Church, Stuttgart, lives in the vicinity with his wife and child and has taken over the farming. Their daughter, Jimelle, lives in Texas with her husband and two children.

Rodgers' sister added that along with serving her church and community, Rodgers has stepped in to serve her family whenever needed. For instance, when Dougan was diagnosed with breast cancer, Rodgers took care of her children and home during chemo-



Yvonne Rodgers (right) was named *Arkansas Baptist News* 2015 Mother of the Year. She was nominated by her sister, Libbie Dougan (left).

therapy treatment.

"Yvonne 'raised herself,' me, her two children and her three grandchildren – and my three children!" Dougan wrote. "She is a godly woman of prayer and of action. Her home and heart are always open! Her food is always the best! She is the 'go to – get 'er done' Mother of the Year. She is the real Proverbs 31:10-31 woman, as well as the woman referred to in James 3:17-18."

Rodgers added, "There are many other mothers that are more deserving of this honor than I am, but I accept it hum-

bly as a gift from God. And I just want to say that there are so many mothers that have a hard time and I just wish they could all be honored as they deserve. And the other thing is that Libbie, who nominated me, is very responsible for this, and I appreciate that a lot. I accept this on behalf of all mothers."

She also noted the blessing her husband has been.

"If you have a good father for your children, it helps a lot to be a good mother," she said.

Contact Jessica Vanderpool at [jessica@arkansasbaptist.org](mailto:jessica@arkansasbaptist.org).

## Little Red River debuts DR feeding unit

THE HAMBURGERS, baked beans and potato salad served at Arkansas State University (ASU)-Heber Springs – which is a center of ASU-Beebe – by Little Red River Baptist Association's (LRRBA) disaster relief (DR) feeding unit represented more than a hot meal. They represented the completion of the association's feeding unit.

Volunteers set up the new unit April 29 for its first event, preparing and serving meals for ASU-Heber Springs faculty, staff and students during lunch as a way of connecting with students and gaining experience before being deployed, said Melinda Wilkinson, LRRBA ministry assistant.

Ed Lauderdale, member of First Baptist Church, Heber Springs, designed the feeding unit and did much of the labor on the inside of the truck. He previously designed Unit 1,

which is the Arkansas Baptist State Convention's (ABSC) disaster relief feeding unit.

Randy Garrett, ABSC disaster relief director, noted the instrumental role Lauderdale has played not only in getting LRRBA's unit off the ground, but also in DR work statewide.

"We appreciate what Ed has done for us over the years," Garrett said.

The association's new feeding unit is capable of serving up to 200 hot meals per day at the scene of a crisis or disaster.

A brochure about the unit states that the "mission is to show the love of Christ by providing drinks and hot nutritious meals to those directly impacted by crisis, including families, fire and law enforcement personnel, other first responders and volunteer crews."

"This unit will fill a void that we've had for providing

food for first responders," Garrett said.

The feeding unit includes a fully equipped kitchen and has two 10-liter cooking vats, a 36-inch griddle station, a convection oven, a microwave, a refrigerator/freezer, a 31-cup coffee maker, a 10,000-watt generator, a 100-pound cylinder propane tank, a 50-gallon fresh water tank and a covered serving window.

The unit partners with the ABSC to respond to disasters across the state and works independently as a stand-alone unit to respond to local disasters of a smaller scale.

"We started it, of course, in response to the tornadoes that we'd been having, especially those that hit Vilonia and Clinton, ... and at times, we have search and rescue squads come in locally," said Larry Thomas, LRRBA director of missions. "So we designed it to

use in our association, but we wanted to be involved in the state whenever they needed us to go anywhere."

More than 30 volunteers, representing 26 LRRBA churches, have been trained and certified and are ready to serve when the need arises. Don and Sue Feemster and Jimbo and Jan Ruple, all members of First Baptist Church, Quitman, are blue caps assigned to the feeding unit.

"We're just anxious to serve but praying for no disasters. But we are prepared to serve if we do have one," said Sue Feemster. "The team is great, and they all work well together. I think we will all be able to do a good job efficiently."

Thomas added that a metal building that is 30 feet by 40 feet was also built to house the feeding unit, as well as a tool trailer.

## ABN Digest

Stories of interest  
to Arkansas Baptists

### Court marriage decision may impact seminaries

WASHINGTON (BP) – Southern Baptist seminary leaders are among those expressing concern at the U.S. solicitor general's admission that nationwide legalization of gay marriage could lead to the removal of tax-exempt status from religious institutions that stand for traditional marriage. Also expressing concern are the National Religious Broadcasters and the Southern Baptist Convention's Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission. Todd Linn, chairman of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary's board of trustees, told Baptist Press the "prospect of legalizing gay marriage across the nation raises a host of questions and concerns for religious institutions and conservative evangelical seminaries such as SEBTS."

### Google changes may alter church searches

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) – A change in Google's formula for prioritizing search results could keep churches without mobile-friendly websites from being as visible online to potential visitors. Starting April 21, Google updated its algorithms for searches done from mobile devices to give higher placement in the results to websites that are compatible with such devices. That means churches with older, more basic websites may not appear among the top results when mobile phone users search for "Baptist church" and their city. "Why is this a concern?" asked Michael Magruder, director of LifeWay.com for LifeWay Christian Resources. "Google estimates that over 60 percent of search queries currently originate from mobile devices." Churches need to check to make certain their websites are mobile optimized, he said.

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[arkansasbaptist.org/abn-digest](http://arkansasbaptist.org/abn-digest)



# 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)

## Posers and repentance

A scene from the movie "Wild Hogs" is helpful in illustrating where Christianity is today in America.

In a defining scene in the movie – which is about urban men seeking to escape their mundane lives by riding cross-country on Harley-Davidson motorcycles – the villain of the movie calls the men out as "posers" and not real bikers.

It happens when the men stop at a roadside bar where they meet the Del Fuego biker gang, headed by the tough biker Jack. Jack calls the Wild Hogs "posers" and steals one of their motorcycles to rub it in.

By the end of the movie,

the urban biker adventurers realize they really want no part of being a biker gang, because, in their opinion, biker gangs are thugs, thieves, drunkards and generally wayward souls who haven't

grown into real men. The gang members were in all actuality the real posers, refusing to

### PRESSING ON

Tim Yarbrough  
Phil. 3:14



accept the real responsibilities of life.

We live in a world today full of posers, and no poser is more damaging than the one who pretends to be Christian.

Recently, the Pew Research Center released a study of the U.S. Religious Landscape that shows that – while Americans who self-identify as Christians

has dropped from 78 to 71 percent – the number of "born again" evangelicals has actually grown slightly from 34 percent to 35 percent.

Being a Christian can mean many things to many people. But generally, when one identifies himself or herself as a born-again Christian evangelical, it narrows it down to someone who believes in and is committed to the Lord Jesus Christ.

While mainline denominations continue to lose members (5 million members since the last survey), evangelical churches have gained 2 million members.

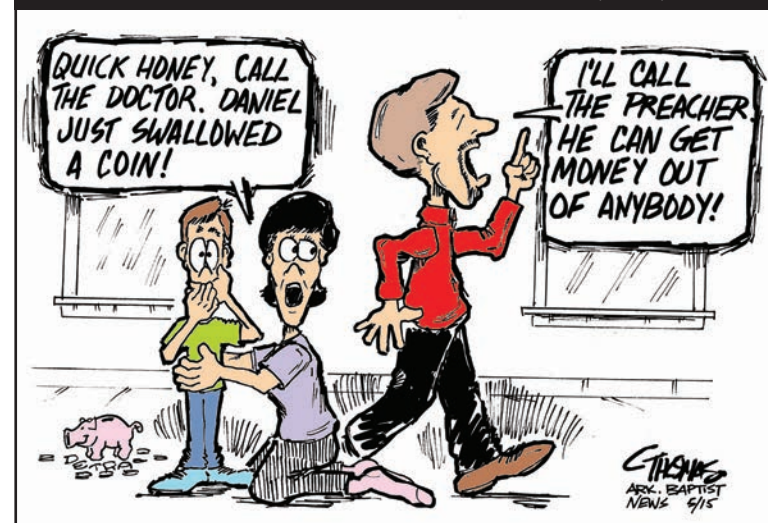
How a person identifies himself or herself is really of little consequence to God; rather, it is the lifestyle he lives. God wants total commitment to His cause and not posers:

"Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from

me, you evildoers!' (Matt. 7:22-23, NIV).

What this means is posers won't inherit the kingdom of God, but rather those who repent of their sins and commit to follow Jesus Christ every day of their lives.

Cartoon by Gary Thomas



## Revive us again

When I was in Bible college, our missions and evangelism professor, James Cecil, used to say, "We don't schedule revival. We schedule a series of protracted meetings and pray for revival."

This spring, many churches, including ours, will be scheduling meetings and praying for a movement of God. There will be special music, an air of expectation, dynamic preachers and hopefully a renewed sense of spiritual awakening within our congregations. Sometimes we make a mistake when it comes time for revival. We think that a

special preacher or singer will bring revival with them. It's as if we think preachers have this box marked "revival" in their desk drawer and they pull it out when it comes time for meetings. Unfortunately, there is no revival box.

The only one who can bring revival is the Spirit of God.

The classic verse of Scripture about revival (2 Chron. 7:14) tells us that His willingness to move is contingent on our desire to experience more of Him. If we aren't interested in Him "showing up," He won't. If we meet His conditions, He will. What an awesome

thought that the God of the universe waits to see if we want to be in His presence! If we were able to understand, for only a moment, the magnificence of His glory, we would count no cost too great.

Even though people may accept Jesus during revival meetings, revival is not primarily for lost people. Revival is for the people of God, trying to reconnect with the Lord. We often get caught up in the things of the world and harbor sin in our lives that grieves the Spirit. Once we deal with these things, seek His presence and show Him that we are serious, He will move.

Ultimately, the reason we do not experience revival is very simple. We do not want

it. We say that we do, but revival costs something. We must give up our favorite sins. On the surface, this sounds easy, but the fact is that the

we need a time to stop, reassess our spiritual condition and ask God to do a fresh work in our hearts.

Whether your church has already been through a series of meetings, or will be soon, remember that true revival begins not with the meetings, but with our desperation to have it. An old hymn says, "Lord, send a revival, and let it begin in me." Let's pray that 2015 will be the year of a great revival in the hearts of Arkansans!

Kim Reeder is pastor of Barton Chapel Baptist Church in Tyrone and a frequent contributor to the Arkansas Baptist News.



pleasures of sin do last for a season, even if they bring heartache in the end. Sometimes we get so blinded by the distractions of the world that



### VIEWPOINT

Kim Reeder  
Barton Chapel Baptist Church  
Tyrone



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## Family Matters

### *You are not my first priority*

I frequently lead marriage enrichment experiences for Arkansas churches. This past weekend was different because my wife and I attended a marriage retreat where I wasn't the leader. My wife and I were the listeners and learners. We had a great time growing in our relationship with God and each other.

We had placed this retreat on our calendar, aware that our 11-year-old son had a midseason baseball tournament leading up to the retreat. Their team won three games, which put them into the championship on Saturday during our retreat. My wife and I attended the retreat and were not present to support our son's championship game. Or were we? My son was the starting pitcher and pitched five innings with multiple strikeouts and some putouts leading their team to win the championship game 10-8, and we missed it. Or did we? Were we unsupportive, uninvolved parents? Some might think so, but in the long run, I think we became a better couple and better parents for missing the game (one of the few we have missed).

My children are not the center of our family. We don't make decisions about what will ultimately please them. We make decisions about what will ultimately please God in our family life (1 Cor. 10:31). This equips our children to keep from becoming selfish, immature adults who believe everything revolves around them.

During dinner Sunday afternoon, after affirming my son for winning, I told him that we purposefully missed his game for his benefit. I reminded my children they are not the No. 1 priority in our family life. They are No. 3 behind my relationship with God and then their mother. I believe that one of the best things I can do for my children is order my priorities and model a consistent walk with God and nurture a healthy marriage with their mother. Sometimes my priorities get off track and I have to "re-track" and rearrange schedules to reflect the right order. By prioritizing my relationships, everyone feels like a priority because of the way God designed us to function in our families.

*Ben Phillips serves on the Arkansas Baptist State Convention evangelism and church health team.*



Phillips

# Shepherd the flock of God among you

I was saved at age 25, was called to full-time vocational ministry at age 30 and afterward began attending Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary (MABTS) in Germantown, Tenn.

A lot of things happened my first week of seminary at MABTS. The following are just a few:

1) At new student orientation, a professor said, "Look to your left; look to your right. The guy on either side of you will not be in ministry in five years." He was right.

2) I was introduced to Gray Allison, then MABTS president, who told me that most of the world was lost and that millions had never heard the name of Jesus and we have to go and tell them about Christ. That statement "rocked" my world.

3) I was asked by a student if I was Calvinist or Armenian; and I had no idea what he was talking about.

4) And lastly, I met a young 22-year-old Bible college graduate who was pastoring his first church who thought he had it all figured out. At lunch, he would make comments about how if he was Adrian Rogers, pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis at the time, that he would pastor this way, and he would do this and he would do that. I thought to myself, "First, you aren't Adrian Rogers; and secondly, you keep talking and 'God is going to smack you!'"

Sometimes as pastors, we can forget this verse – Acts 20:28 (NASB): "Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood."

The Church belongs to Christ, and we pastors are just stewards. The Church is precious, special, valuable and blood-bought, not something for us pastors to use for our own egos, interests and steppingstones or for our financial prosperity. We are shepherds and stewards of God's Flock that we one day will have to give accountability for before Christ.

Secondly, since God's Flock, the Church, is so valuable,

not everyone can serve as her shepherd. God has established a high standard for the shepherd stewards of His Flock. As pastors – the shepherds, elders, overseers – who are called by God, we should be a cut above the rest. We shepherds have to be men, the husband of one wife, not a new convert and one who manages his own household well, plus several other qualifications found in 1 Timothy 3:1-7.

Peter, inspired by the Holy Spirit, said in 1 Peter 5:3 (NASB), "Nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock."

Our marriages, our personal finances, our parenting practices, our management of God's Flock and our relationships with others are inside the aquarium for all believers and nonbelievers to view, critique and, unfortunately, sometimes give their opinions. Pastors are not perfect. We make mistakes, but we are held to a higher standard. That is a part of the calling and requirement for shepherding God's Flock. And, sadly, pastors can be disqualified from pastoring. Remember what happened to David.

2 Samuel 12:14 (NASB) says, "However, because by this deed you have given occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also that is born to you shall surely die."

Lastly, since God's Flock is so valuable and God's shepherds are held to a higher standard, this is why the writer of Hebrews, moved by God, had this to say to the "Flock of God" in Hebrews 13:17 (NASB): "Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you."

God has given us His blood-bought Church and His God-called shepherds to take the gospel to the ends of the earth. He called us and empowered us to be the light in a dark world. There are millions who have never heard the name of Jesus. May we be the Church God has called us to be!

Archie Mason is president of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention and senior pastor of Central Baptist Church in Jonesboro.



### PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

Archie Mason

## Praying and fasting for the SBC

Arkansas Baptists, thank you for your prayers last month as our staff spent time in Northwest Arkansas completing our study of "The Choice: The Christ-Centered Pursuit of Kingdom Outcomes." We had a tremendous time of fellowship and growth together. One of the highlights of our time was a visit to Camp Siloam where we heard from Jason Wilkie, executive director, about the wonderful things God is doing there. We are all truly blessed to be part of the ministry that takes place at the camp year after year.

We also came away more convicted than ever regarding this statement from "The Choice": "This is at the heart of our message in this book. Any assessment of behavior must be evaluated alongside Scripture, not social norms. Just because Christians behave a certain way does not make it right or wrong, especially when the only person to whom every believer will answer someday is Jesus Christ. Our plea is that we live in such a way as to hear Him say to us, 'Well done.' If a return to the Scriptures as

our filter for life and leadership moves people to repentance, revival, and another Great Awakening, then God be praised."

This statement immediately led me to think of this

year's Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Annual Meeting June 16-17 in Columbus, Ohio. This year's annual meeting theme is Great Awakening: Clear Agreement, Visible Union, Extraordinary Prayer, based on Romans 13:11.

SBC President Ronnie Floyd urges us each to set aside one day between now and June 16 to pray and fast for our upcoming annual meeting. I would like to echo one specific prayer request Floyd shared: "Lord, lead our Southern Baptist pastors, leaders and church-

es to come together now in 'clear agreement, visible union and extraordinary prayer' for the next great awakening and to reach the world for Christ."

As a Foundation staff, we are setting aside May 26 (1 p.m.) to May 27 (1 p.m.) to pray and fast for the SBC. Please join us in praying and fasting.

Bobby Thomas is president of Arkansas Baptist Foundation.



### KINGDOM FOUNDATION

Bobby Thomas



Secure the future of the official news journal of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention for years to come by making a contribution to the ABN Endowment Fund. Contact the Arkansas Baptist Foundation at 501-376-0732 or 800-798-0969.



# Huckabee launches run in Hope

HOPE – Former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee announced his candidacy for president of the United States May 5 from his hometown of Hope.

Following the formal announcement of his presidential bid, Huckabee, who served as pastor of numerous Arkansas Baptist churches before entering politics in the early 1990s, reminisced about growing up in Hope and highlighted some of his campaign's emphases.

Huckabee referenced his multiterm governorship in "Bill Clinton's Arkansas" as reason to believe he is the Republican candidate best suited to be victorious against Dem-

ocratic front-runner Hillary Clinton, former first lady and wife of former President Bill Clinton, who is also a native of Hope.

"The journey that begins in Hope today can bring this nation to higher ground, but I cannot do it without people being my partners," the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* reported Huckabee as saying. "I ask you to join with me today ... to preserve this great republic so that someday your children and grandchildren can still go from hope to higher ground."

America "has lost our way morally," Baptist Press reported Huckabee saying. "We witnessed the slaughter of over 55 million babies in the name of

choice, and we are now threatening the foundation of religious liberty by criminalizing Christianity and demanding that we abandon biblical principles of natural marriage."

Huckabee's wife, Janet, and current Arkansas Gov. Asa Hutchinson, also spoke during the program.

During Huckabee's first run for president, he received more than 4 million votes and carried eight states before Mitt Romney won the party's nomination, according to the *Democrat-Gazette*.

Huckabee's spokesperson, Alice Stewart, said the former governor took to the campaign trail immediately to visit Iowa and South Carolina on his



Mike Huckabee, former Arkansas Baptist pastor and governor, announced his campaign for president May 5 from his hometown of Hope.

"Factories, Farms and Freedoms" tour.

Six Republicans and two Democrats have entered the presidential race at this time, said Baptist Press. According to *The New York Times*,

seven additional Republicans and three additional Democrats are likely to enter the race as well, bringing the projected field to include 13 Republicans and five Democrats.

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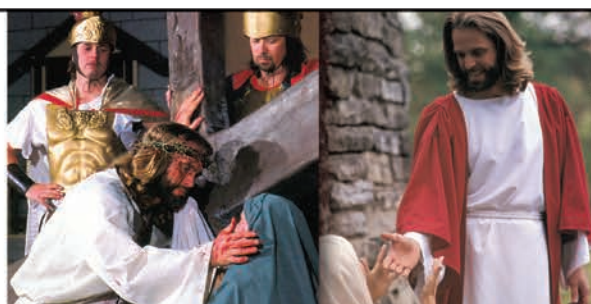
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# NWA summer missionary wrongly jailed, shares Christ

Lisa Falknor  
Arkansas Baptist News

FAYETTEVILLE – Eli Leslie will serve again this summer as a missionary for the Washington Madison Baptist Association; only this time, he hopes to stay out of jail.

Last summer, on June 17, the senior at the University of Arkansas said that while driv-

ing to a church to set up for vacation Bible school (VBS), he and two other female summer missionaries got pulled over by a policeman.

"I was a little heavy on my foot that day, so it did not come as a surprise that he pulled me over," Leslie said.

What happened next, though, did surprise him.

"The officer told me that

my car license plate did not match up to the car registration. He said he would have to bring me to the jail," Leslie said.

The girls found another ride home, and Leslie found himself handcuffed against the side of the police car. He had no idea the license plate had been stolen, he said, and kept thinking that he would be set free soon.

Unfortunately, Leslie spent that day behind bars.

"I had to take my shoes off and go barefoot in the jail cell, which was so gross to me – I'm a 'germaphobe,'" he said. "I did not know what to do. I just kept singing those vacation Bible school songs."

After a while, another prisoner came into the cell too.

"I began to ask him about his relationship with Christ," Leslie said. "He asked me if I had read the Bible the whole way through. I told him that I had not but that I knew some stories from the Bible. For a whole hour, I got to share about Christ. The prisoner (Juan) kept asking questions and encouraging me to talk."

Finally, after four hours, a mug shot and a good character reference from area pastors



Student summer missionary Eli Leslie (left) and Chaplain Earl Adams stand by the sign of the Washington County Jail. Leslie thanked Chaplain Earl Adams last month for visiting him while he was incarcerated almost a year ago after being wrongly accused of stealing his own car.

and his boss, Ron Lomax, director of missions for Washington Madison Baptist Association, Leslie got out of jail. Even the \$2,000 bond fee was waived.

"We couldn't believe Eli – of all people – being arrested for anything," said Lomax. "He's such a good, respectful, very honest guy."

Lomax said that it was obvious that he should not have been sent to jail because they had just returned from a VBS meeting. The material was still in the backseat.

Leslie said he felt God's

presence while in jail.

"I just kept smiling the whole time because I had a peace about everything," he said. "When I got into the car, I began to cry realizing all that I had gone through."

He made it just in time to attend his next VBS event.

"I'm not sure why God had me go through that experience," Leslie said. "The other prisoner never made a profession of faith, but he kept listening and asking me to tell him more."

Lisa Falknor is northwest correspondent for the ABN.



Eli Leslie shares with other 2015 summer missionaries about being arrested and sharing his faith in jail.

## Anna Hurst to serve as ABN summer intern

LITTLE ROCK – Anna Hurst, a senior at Ouachita Baptist University in Arkadelphia, is serving as summer intern at the *Arkansas Baptist News* (ABN).

She is pursuing a double major in mass communications and business administration with an emphasis in marketing at Ouachita.

Hurst is interning through Student Summer Missions/Kaleo Arkansas Summer Ministry Associates (SSM/KASMA).

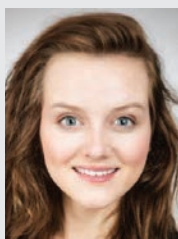
SSM/KASMA, which is supported by the Dixie Jackson Arkansas Missions Offering, began in 2011 as a partnership between Student Summer Missions and Kaleo Arkansas. During the summer, participants serve in Arkansas Baptist churches, associations and entities and are paired with a mentor who discipled them in their journeys.

"We are excited to have Anna intern with us this summer. She will be a valuable member of our team as we report on the activities of Arkansas Baptists as they seek to reach their communities, state, nation and world for Jesus Christ," said Tim Yarbrough, ABN editor/executive director.

Hurst's duties will include writing, editing, photography, field reporting, as well as assisting

with newspaper archives, social media and website updates.

Hurst is the daughter of Jody and Teresa Hurst. Jody Hurst is associate pastor and minister of music at Crystal Hill Baptist Church, Little Rock. Teresa Hurst serves as administrative assistant at the Arkansas Baptist Children's Homes and Family Ministries (ABCHomes).



Hurst

MIDWESTERN BAPTIST



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# 'Day in Delta' changes 37 lives for Jesus Christ

**HELENA-WEST HELENA** – It was more than an average day in the Delta for 37 people who accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior during and immediately following Centennial Baptist Association Day in the Delta April 11.

The event was a partnership with the Centennial Baptist Association in Stuttgart and Second Baptist Church (Park Avenue), Helena-West Helena. The mission day included a block party held at and around the Second Baptist property, service projects throughout the surrounding community and evangelistic outreach.

"We had done the event in the county twice. We thought we'd see about trying to stretch out but not go so far that we weren't able to have strong participation with the people here in Centennial," said Doug Hibbard, pastor of First Baptist Church, Almyra.

Hibbard said that when Centennial contacted him for information on the area in preparation for their association's mission day, Willie Jacobs, Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC) missions team member, told Hibbard



Hundreds of residents of Helena-West Helena and surrounding communities took part in the Centennial Baptist Association Day in the Delta event April 11. Centennial Baptist Association partnered with Second Baptist Church (Park Avenue), Helena-West Helena, to host the event. *Photos by Tammy Albrecht*

that one of the upcoming state wide Acts 1:8 One Day outreach events was set to be held in the Delta.

"It kind of let us set some ground work. ... That was a good thing," said Hibbard.

Hibbard said the fact that Sam Roberts, pastor of First Baptist Church, Stuttgart, one of Centennial's churches, is one of the instructors for the ABSC's Delta Connection theological education ministry in the Delta was yet another reason the association decided to extend their ministry part-

nership to the area.

"We knew there was a great need in the Delta area. That's why we kind of thought we would try to go to the Delta," said Tammy Albrecht, wife of Jimmy Albrecht, pastor of First Baptist Church, DeWitt.

The block party included games, crafts, horse rides, a fire truck and a barrel train for children. New tennis shoes were also provided to children in need. Second Baptist provided a live band. Some volunteers built wheelchair ramps or did yard work for members of

the community, while others shared the gospel door to door and passed out tracts; others prayer walked. A prayer room was also set up inside Second Baptist.

Leaders of Centennial Baptist Association and Jarvis Smith, pastor of Second Baptist, had predicted a turnout of around 200 people to the event, but the unofficial estimates are much higher, said Albrecht, who estimated the event had between 500 to 800 visitors due to the number of hotdogs, chicken on the stick

and snow cones given out.

Six individuals were saved during the Day in the Delta event. The following week 31 more people were saved after Second Baptist followed up with them.

"It was a great opportunity for our association to work together and help one of our fellow Baptist churches reach their community," said Hibbard. "There is not a chance that my church is going to get bigger from going to Helena, but the Lord's Church gets bigger and that's a good thing."

## 3 generations baptized together

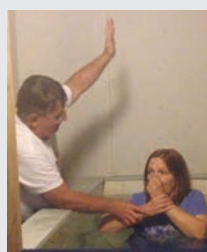
**DENNARD** – Members of The New Tabernacle Baptist Church in Dennard, more commonly known as "The Zoo Church Village" because it was renovated from an old zoo, witnessed some unique baptisms May 6.

Pastor Rick Montgomery baptized three generations of one family – a grandmother, her daughter and two of her grandchildren – in a Wednesday evening service.

Montgomery explained that one of the old buildings on the church property has been converted into a gift shop called "Market Place Ministry," where church and community members can sell items. The church uses it as a way to invite community members who don't have a church home to attend church.

Cindi Schroeder was one such person.

Schroeder said she had placed some items for sale at the gift shop, noting that her



Cindi Schroeder (above and top right), is baptized with her daughter and granddaughters.



grandparents and mother had run the old zoo's restaurant and two gift shops when the zoo was still in operation.

Schroeder was invited to church. She accepted the invitation and eventually began bringing her three grandchildren and then her daughter, who was visiting.

Schroeder's daughter, Elizabeth Hunt, accepted Christ in April. And during revival services in early May, Schroeder rededicated her life; and her grandchildren – Ashley Nicole Hunt, 10, and twins Billie Jo

Hunt and Alexis Faye Hunt, both 9 – accepted Christ. Schroeder, her daughter and two of her grandchildren were baptized during the May 6 service, and her other grandchild will be counseled prior to baptism.

"It was just awesome," said Schroeder. "My heart just sings every time I think about it. To know Christ is in my life and He is my Lord and Savior is just fantastic! There's some amazing things going on at The Zoo Church Village."

## July 1 ObamaCare deadline looms for some churches

**DALLAS, Texas (BP)** – Churches and ministries that reimburse their employees for individual health coverage may soon find themselves facing stiff penalties of up to \$36,500 per employee, per year, under the Affordable Care Act federal health care law commonly known as "ObamaCare," as a grace period expires June 30.

The penalties on employers who maintain employer payment plans were to begin in January, but the Internal Revenue Service granted a six-month reprieve.

Organizations that offer GuideStone health plans are not at risk of these penalties. GuideStone's health plans – both its personal and group plans – are church health plans and are considered group health plans under federal law and thus are not affected by these penalties.

"Fortunately, GuideStone health plan participants and the churches and ministries that employ them can rest as-

sured that they can continue to pay for coverage as they have in the past and will meet the guidelines under the current law," said Donna Lively, managing director of insurance plans at GuideStone Financial Resources. "Organizations that don't utilize GuideStone should consult with their legal and tax advisors to determine how to comply with the letter of the law."

GuideStone has developed new health coverage options that may be appropriate for smaller churches. Additionally, churches with only one employee can apply for coverage for that lone staff member during the employee's first 60 days of employment. GuideStone encourages churches and ministries to remain vigilant about the Affordable Care Act and the related administrative policies that can create significant challenges for churches.

More information can be found at [GuideStone.org/HealthReform](http://GuideStone.org/HealthReform).



# The family that plays together stays together

YOU WORK 40-PLUS hours a week to help provide for your family. You play your child's favorite song 20 times in a row just because it makes him smile. You kiss your child's scraped knee and arrange play dates with his friend. As he gets older, you help him with homework and take him to extracurricular activities. You agonize as he learns to drive, worry as he begins to date and cheer as he finally graduates high school.

You are a proud parent. You'd do anything for your child.

But as you eagerly provide for your child in every way possible, don't forget to also give your child the all-too-often overlooked gifts of time and play.

In a society focused on constantly "going," the concept of a family simply taking time to "play together" is all but lost.

"Playing together gives families a chance to relax and get to know each other," said Allison Kizzia, Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC) evangelism and church health team member.

"It gives opportunities for conversations about life and for parents to connect their faith to everyday situations."

Setting goals for family time is vital, according to Warren Gasaway, a fellow ABSC evangelism and church health team member.

"Having a purpose for those times makes them more meaningful," he said. "Fun is not the end goal. It's a by-product of making sure that the family is spending time together. We, as parents, with just a little bit of thought, can make those times meaningful."

"Whether it be an activity or a nice dinner or a time

of decompression (and) rest, when we go at it knowing that it's the only point of the day that we have together, we will take full advantage of it. It's time for us to manage our time and have meaning behind it, rather than just let it go haphazardly."

He also noted that spending quality time together and playing together is about more than the "play" itself.

"Playing is good. Playing is right. And it is just good old 'playtime' that we want," he said.

"But playing with a goal to bond with your children, to show them how to have a good time, to instill memories, is better."

He gave the example of playing catch with his son.

"If I'm going outside to play catch with my son, that's good. But if I'm going outside to play catch with my son and help him to enjoy us being together, that's better," he said.

"If I'm going outside to play catch where baseball is the end goal, then I may miss an opportunity for something deeper."

He added, "As parents, we want our children to remember playing catch with Mom and/or Dad, but we also should want them to remember the feeling that they got while they were playing catch with us. It can be a great time of affirmation, of sharing, etc."

So for all the busy parents in the world – the ones helping with homework and shuffling their children to and from activities like the fate of mankind depends on soccer practice – the question comes down to this: What kinds of activities should parents be doing with their children?

Kizzia encouraged parents



to tailor activities to their families.

"I don't think there is a one-size-fits-all plan," she said. "Families need to look at what they enjoy, the ages of their children and the time they have. Even organized activities can lead to family time. I know a family who goes to a fast-food restaurant every Tuesday night after ball practice, and they have a question over dinner that everyone has an opportunity to answer."

Parents should consider choosing activities that are not age-specific, according to Ben Phillips, ABSC evangelism and church health team member. He suggested choosing something, instead, that can be done together for the long run.

"The challenge for families is finding some things that everyone in the family likes to do. It may be hard, so you

might have to split the difference, sharing time between activities so that everyone enjoys at least something you do together," said Phillips.

"Sports activities can be fun, but most children and families won't do these for the long-term and they typically focus around the family watching one individual."

He gave examples of potential activities for families – activities like hunting, fishing, golfing, playing board games, hiking, eating out and watching sports together.

"Finding activities that your family can engage in throughout the various seasons and years of life will create memorable times for your family to enjoy for generations," he said.

He said his family has done a variety of things together – from grocery shopping to fishing. He shared that once he even turned a sports game he

was watching with his family into a teaching opportunity. He said a leader on one of the teams was having a bad game, and as a result, he "became frustrated and lazy in his play."

"I used this as a teaching opportunity with my sons to stress the importance of playing hard all the time, even when things aren't going your way," Phillips said.

Kizzia admitted spending time together as a family is not easy.

"It takes sacrifice, but the reward is worth the effort," she said. "When we strengthen our families, we strengthen our churches and communities."

*This is an abbreviated version of a story that appeared in the Spring/Summer 2014 Arkansas Christian Parent magazine. Visit at [arkansasbaptist.org/arkansas-christian-parent](http://arkansasbaptist.org/arkansas-christian-parent) to read this and other stories from the magazine.*

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## Collegiate leaders gather to share ideas

LITTLE ROCK – The Arkansas Collegiate Multipliers Gathering, which took place April 22-23 in Little Rock, provided a time for Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC) staff and several national and state collegiate leaders to fellowship and learn from each other about how to reach collegians in Arkansas and around the nation.

“We learned each model is distinctively different, but basic principles are much the same, and the Church is elevated,” said David James, ABSC collegiate and young leaders team leader.

The event was sponsored by the North American Mission Board (NAMB) and the ABSC executive team, church planting team and collegiate and young leaders team.

Brian Frye, national collegiate strategist at NAMB and collegiate evangelism strategist for Ohio Collegiate Ministries with the State Convention of



Participants work together during the Arkansas Collegiate Multipliers Gathering.

Baptists in Ohio, represented NAMB at the event. Other national collegiate leaders came from Resonate Church in Washington, The Salt Company in Iowa, h2o Church in Ohio and Crosspoint Church in Kansas. Arkansas leaders were Noe Garcia, college pastor at Cross Church, Fayetteville; Dan Reeves, teaching pastor at the Journey Campus of

Central Baptist Church, Jonesboro, and Aaron Rogers, college pastor at Grand Avenue Baptist Church, Fort Smith.

“Who can see the future? Multipliers gave me a glimpse of what collegiate ministry could be in our churches and on our campuses!” said Lynn Loyd, missions consultant for the ABSC collegiate and young leaders team.



**JORDAN RETIRES** – A retirement celebration was held at the Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC) Building May 12 in honor of Dan Jordan, ABSC executive and administrative team member, for his 29 years of ministry to Arkansas Baptists.

## Wellspring set for July 24-25

SEARCY – The Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC) is offering a statewide event for women called “Wellspring.” The event will be held at First Baptist Church, Searcy, July 24-25.

This year’s theme is “ALL For You ... Surrender. Sacrifice. Serve.” This year’s missionary speakers are Barbara Schleiff and Jennifer Brungardt. Worship will be led by One Accord.

This event will feature breakout sessions, testimonies, fellowship and ministry opportunities.

“If you love missions, you’ll

want to join us at Wellspring for a weekend of missions celebrating! You will be challenged to be intentional about helping others get involved in missions,” said Debbie Moore, ABSC missions team member.

In addition to this event, the Arkansas Woman’s Missionary Union annual meeting will take place at the same time. A new state president will be elected.

For more information and to register, visit [absc.org/women](http://absc.org/women). Registration deadline is July 10. Each person is responsible for her own lodging arrangements.

## WorshipWorks helps students discover their passions, gifts

ARKADELPHIA – The Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC) will offer a worship arts event for children and students called “WorshipWorks.” This event consists of two simultaneous camps – JoyWorks and PraiseWorks – on the campus of Ouachita Baptist University that will be held in July.

JoyWorks, to be held July 14-17, is for children who have completed grades four through six; and PraiseWorks, to be held July 13-17, is for students who have completed grades seven through 12.

WorshipWorks will help participants develop their talents and encounter dynamic worship. The event will equip participants with hands-on experiences and give them a place to discover their passions and God-given abilities.

“We are all called to be worshippers. That is what WorshipWorks equips children

and students to do!” said Larry Grayson, ABSC evangelism and church health team member. “They will learn about worship, engage in worship, be challenged with the gospel and have the opportunity to take classes that enhance skills they can use in worship. Both of these camps are much more than just choir. Participants can gain experience in guitar, drums, graphic arts, sign language, learning how to rehearse as a praise band/praise team and much more.”

Grayson added that if one’s church doesn’t offer children and students these types of opportunities, WorshipWorks is the perfect place for them.

The event will culminate with a combined worship finale on the last day of camp. For more information about these camps and to register, visit [joyworksarkansas.com](http://joyworksarkansas.com) and [praiseworksarkansas.com](http://praiseworksarkansas.com).

CELEBRATING GOD AT WORK

# Wellspring

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## First Baptist Church, Searcy

### July 24-25, 2015

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 \* Follow us on Facebook {[facebook.com/ArkansasWMCU](https://facebook.com/ArkansasWMCU)}  
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Wellspring is sponsored by the ABSC Missions Team and Arkansas WMCU.

Missionary  
Barbara  
Schleiff



Worship with  
One Accord



Missionary  
Jennifer  
Brungardt









**'CELEBRATE LIFE'** — Woodland Heights Baptist Church, Conway, hosted the musical "Celebrate Life," with special guests Ragan Courtney (third from left), author, and Cynthia Clawson (second from left), original soloist. About 300 attended each presentation April 18 and April 19. During the presentation, Clawson was accompanied by the church's multigenerational choir. Also pictured are William Love (far left), associate pastor of music and worship at Woodland Heights, and his wife, Marianne Love.

## Workshop teaches art of oral Bible storying

LITTLE ROCK — Thirty-four participants took part in the Bible Storying Workshop held in Little Rock April 18.

The event taught participants the basics of oral Bible storying, including how to lead a Story Fellowship Group using Bible stories; how to connect their own story and testimony to stories from Scripture, and how to craft Bible stories from Scripture passages.

"Oral Bible storying is a craft that can be used anywhere in the world to share the gospel," said Jamie Coker, member of

First Baptist Church, El Dorado, who served as event trainer.

Since 2010, Coker has served with Extreme Missionary Adventures, leading short-term mission trip teams to Honduras, Peru and India. She has been trained in oral Bible storying through StoryRunners, which is a ministry of Cru (Campus Crusade for Christ), and through the International Mission Board storying team.

She said that internationally, Story Fellowship Groups can become house churches. And in the U.S., a Story Fellow-

ship Group might be a Sunday school class, a small group, or a backyard Bible club.

"Wherever you are, you should always be ready to share your story and the good news about Jesus," Coker said. "Storying gives you an easy, natural approach. And who doesn't like a good story?"

The workshop was a Co-operative Program ministry of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC) missions team.

A fall Bible Storying Workshop will be held at the ABSC building Oct. 17.

For information, contact dmoore@absc.org.

### Staff Wanted

Arkansas Baptist Children's Homes and Family Ministries

■ **Houseparent couple** for the Baptist Home for Children in Monticello. This **full-time** position includes salary, medical insurance, life insurance and paid leave.

**Contact:** Randy Luper, 870.367.5358 or rluper@abchomes.org.



**Arkansas Woman's Missionary Union is seeking a part time Executive Director.**

A job description and application can be found at [www.wmuar.org](http://www.wmuar.org) or requested by e-mail at [mjlittle19@aol.com](mailto:mjlittle19@aol.com).

The deadline to apply is June 15th. Resumes may be sent to Margaret Little at [mjlittle19@aol.com](mailto:mjlittle19@aol.com).

**Advertise in the Arkansas Baptist News!**  
[arkansasbaptist.org/advertise](http://arkansasbaptist.org/advertise)

## MABTS hosts alumni luncheon

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary will host a barbecue buffet luncheon for alumni and friends June 16 during the

Southern Baptist Convention in Columbus, Ohio. For information or to register, visit the news update section at [mabts.edu](http://mabts.edu) or call 901-751-3015.

## Campers on Mission 2015 National Rally



**June 16-18**

**Tom Johnson's  
Rally Park  
Marion, N.C.**

[www.campersonmission.net](http://www.campersonmission.net)

For more information,  
contact 479.858.1778 or  
[wccox1@cox.net](mailto:wccox1@cox.net)

## Classifieds Extra

### MISSION OPPORTUNITY

"Uttermost 2015" July 27-31, 2015, **Conway Summer Mission Opportunity.** A smaller church in a growing city (with 20,000 people unclaimed and unconnected to any church within three miles) really could use your help. Starting Monday evening, July 27, and ending Friday evening, July 31. Morning mission training. Afternoons serving. Evenings for worship, fun and fellowship. Friday block parties. Total cost per person for lodging, food and shirt: \$125. Without lodging: \$65. For information, call or text Youth Pastor Jonathan McDaniel at 501-513-7894 or email Pastor Gary Mitchell at [garynmitchell@hotmail.com](mailto:garynmitchell@hotmail.com).

# Classifieds

### PASTOR

Emmanuel Baptist Church, Batesville, is seeking a **full-time pastor**. Send resumes to Pastor Search Committee, EBC, 1915 Batesville Blvd., Batesville, AR 72501 or [p.huckabee@yahoo.com](mailto:p.huckabee@yahoo.com) or call 870-251-1383 or 870-251-2611.

Bigelow Baptist Church is prayerfully seeking to fill the position of **pastor**. Email resumes to [brandonrakridge@gmail.com](mailto:brandonrakridge@gmail.com).

First Baptist Church, Green Forest, a Southern Baptist church, seeking a **full-time or bi-vocational pastor**. Send resumes to First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 550, Green Forest, AR 72638, Attn: Jewell F. Smith.

The First Baptist Church of Diamond City is prayerfully seeking a **bi-vocational or semiretired pastor** for a small church body. Send resume to [dlr8685@gmail.com](mailto:dlr8685@gmail.com) or P.O. Box 1084, Diamond City, AR 72630.

The First Baptist Church of Casa is seeking a **full-time or bi-vocational pastor**.

Three-bedroom, two-bath brick parsonage furnished. Please send resumes to John Young, 27311 East St. Highway 10, Ola, AR 72853 or email to [johnandnancy@arkwest.com](mailto:johnandnancy@arkwest.com). Phone number: 479-477-2900. Follow the Lord's lead!

First Baptist Church, El Dorado, is prayerfully seeking to fill the position of **senior pastor**. Email resumes to [fbcel-dorado201@gmail.com](mailto:fbcel-dorado201@gmail.com) or mail to Pastor Search Committee, 100 E. Peach St., Suite 350, El Dorado, AR 71730.

Reynolds Baptist Church, Little Rock, is a small church in search of a **bi-vocational pastor**. Mail inquiries to Reynolds Baptist Church, 7111 Fourche Dam Pike, Little Rock, AR 72206, Attn: Pastor Search Committee.

First Baptist of Tuckerman is seeking a **full-time or bi-vocational pastor**. Please send resume to FBC, P.O. Box 1188, Tuckerman, AR 72473.

New Hope Baptist Church in Jay, Okla., is prayerfully seeking a **full-time pastor**. Please send resumes to [newhopebaptistjay@gmail.com](mailto:newhopebaptistjay@gmail.com).

[baptistjay@gmail.com](mailto:baptistjay@gmail.com).

### OTHER STAFF POSITIONS

The Arkansas Baptist State Convention is seeking an **assistant controller** for the accounting department. Accounting degree or equivalent required. Submit resumes to Arkansas Baptist State Convention, Controller, 10 Remington Dr., Little Rock, AR 72204 or email to [jcorley@absc.org](mailto:jcorley@absc.org).

Danville First Baptist Church is seeking a passionate **full-time music minister/worship leader**. Submit resumes to P.O. Box 877, Danville, AR 72833 or [fbcdan@arkwest.com](mailto:fbcdan@arkwest.com), Attn: Search Committee.

The North Central Baptist Association is prayerfully accepting resumes for an **associational missionary**. Resumes will be accepted until Aug. 1, and they can be mailed to the attention of the Search Committee at 268 Main Street, Clinton, AR 72031. For more information, please email

Chairman Billy Reece at [billytreece@hotmail.com](mailto:billytreece@hotmail.com).

FBC, Pea Ridge, is prayerfully seeking a **part-time children's ministry director** to lead volunteers and kids birth-sixth grade. Salary commensurate with experience. Request more information or send resumes: [al@prfbc.org](mailto:al@prfbc.org) or call 479-451-8192.

Ruddell Hill Baptist in Batesville is seeking a **part-time youth minister**. Resumes may be sent to 805 Bethesda Road, Batesville, AR 72501 or [ruddellhillpastor@gmail.com](mailto:ruddellhillpastor@gmail.com).

Calvary Baptist Church is accepting resumes for an **interim minister to students**, beginning January 2015. Resumes may be sent to [office@calvarymo.com](mailto:office@calvarymo.com) or P.O. Box 421, Republic, MO 65738, Attn: Personnel Team. For more information, call 417-732-1405.

Southern Heights Baptist Church is currently seeking both a **full-time youth pastor** and a **full-time worship leader**. Resumes may be sent to [\[stream.net\]\(mailto:stream.net\) or to 279 Highway 221 S., Berryville, AR 72616.](mailto:shbc@wind-</a></p>
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Union Valley Baptist Church of Beebe is seeking a **full-time minister of music** to lead our blended worship services. Located in central Arkansas, Union Valley has an average worship attendance of 500. This individual will be responsible for directing adult and youth choirs, as well as the praise band. Send resume to [timsparks@centurytel.net](mailto:timsparks@centurytel.net).

### MISCELLANEOUS

**Two condos** for rent in Destin, Fla. Two bedrooms, two baths. Email: [lbammer@charter.net](mailto:lbammer@charter.net). Phone: 423-309-4422.

**Davis Church Pew Upholstery**, 30-plus years experience. Melton and Sandra Davis, Quitman, Miss., 601-776-6617.

**Submit a classified:**  
501-376-4791, ext. 5153





**MISSION EL DORADO BLOCK PARTY** — Members of First Baptist Church, El Dorado, hosted a block party May 9 as part of their series of Mission El Dorado outreach events. Church members grilled hot dogs and provided bouncy houses, live music, giveaways and more.



**VBS TRAINING** — More than 500 participants representing 107 Arkansas Baptist churches took part in training for LifeWay Christian Resources' Journey Off the Map vacation Bible school. The training, which was made possible by the Cooperative Program and the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, was hosted at First Baptist Church in Lowell, Central Baptist Church in Jonesboro and Geyer Springs First Baptist Church in Little Rock.

## Arkansans attend Collegiate Summit

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Sixty-five Arkansans, including collegiate student interns, church staff and Baptist Collegiate Ministry staff, were among the 550-plus attendees at the Collegiate Summit event, a national conference for college ministers held in Nashville, Tenn.

"This conference is a triennial meeting that helps us stay connected to the national

scene and gives us good practical help with new and innovative ways to do what we do," said David James, Arkansas Baptist State Convention collegiate and young leaders team leader.

The event included breakout sessions, idea labs, speakers and affinity groups.

"Collegiate Summit was an incredible time of connection,

challenge and creativity," said Brandon Watson, minister to young adults at Immanuel Baptist Church, Little Rock. "I was able to gain insight for future direction in my ministry area and (was) blessed to bounce off ideas with other collegiate ministers from all over the country. I was fortunate to have the opportunity to be there!"

### Church life

A memorial service for **Nadine Bjorkman**, 93, who died Feb. 19 in Bar Harbor, Maine, will be held at 1 p.m., June 9, at Central Baptist Church, North Little Rock, where she was an active member and long-time church clerk. She also served as the Arkansas Baptist State Convention and Executive Board secretary and an annuity board representative. The informal remembrance celebration will be pre-

ceded by a family gathering in Fort Smith on June 7.

**Calvary Baptist Church, Fort Smith**, members will take part in Good Deed Saturday May 30. They will go into the neighborhood to help people around their homes with chores such as changing lightbulbs, raking leaves and mowing yards.

### On the move

**Marion Cornett** is serving as pastor of Witt's Chapel Baptist Church, Maynard.

**Rondal Richardson** is serving as pastor of First Baptist Church, Piggott.

**Charles Colbert** is serving as pastor of First Baptist Church, Knobel.

**Mark Dewbre** is serving as administrative pastor of Park Hill Baptist Church, North Little Rock.

Submit your church news to  
[jeanie@arkansasbaptist.org](mailto:jeanie@arkansasbaptist.org)

## Oxford BC hosts Biker Sunday

OXFORD — Oxford Baptist Church will host its 17th annual Biker Sunday June 14. Bikers will meet at Salem City Park and ride together to the church, leaving at 10:30 a.m. in order to be present for morning worship

at 11 a.m. Those who prefer to drive a car in the procession or meet at the church are welcome to do so. Warner Allen will preach during the service, which will be followed by a fellowship lunch provided by the church.

## CHURCH SERVICES DIRECTORY

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[www.campsiloam.com](http://www.campsiloam.com)



# Commencements held, Tucker receives honorary doctorate

IN ADDITION to more than 400 students graduating from Ouachita Baptist University and Williams Baptist College in recent commencement ceremonies, J.D. "Sonny" Tucker, executive director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, was presented with an honorary doctorate during Ouachita's ceremony.

Ouachita President Rex M. Horne Jr. presented Tucker with an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree on behalf of the university's board of trustees. Tucker, a 1982 graduate of Ouachita, also holds Master of Divinity and Doctor of Philosophy degrees from Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary in Cordova, Tenn.

Horne emphasized that Tucker "is adept at analyzing and engaging young adults in ministries within the Arkansas Baptist State Convention and beyond."

He added that "for many

years, Ouachita has benefited from its relationship with this good man and the strong reputation he has built in service to God and the Church."

"From the deepest place in my heart, I want to express my appreciation for this tremendous honor," Tucker responded. "To receive this recognition



from a place that I love so deeply will be among my greatest honors and moments in life."

Citing Ouachita's "impact and investment" in him as a student, Tucker also expressed appreciation for Ouachita

"being a place that has greatly impacted my two children." Megan Seyler, the daughter of he and his wife, Nicki, is a 2010 Ouachita graduate; and their son, Curt, graduated from Ouachita at the May commencement.

Ouachita officials conferred a total of 350 degrees, including the university's first three Bachelor of Fine Arts degrees, on 343 graduates during the university's May 9 spring commencement. This year's graduating class featured 143 honor graduates. University officials also recognized

26 graduates who completed Ouachita's Carl Goodson Honors Program and 34 members of the Alpha Chi national honor society.

In his remarks to the graduates, Horne highlighted the values of opportunity, symme-



Williams Baptist College graduates switch tassels during commencement ceremonies in Walnut Ridge (above). Ouachita Baptist President Rex Horne (lower left) addresses graduates in Arkadelphia.

try, community and legacy.

Williams Baptist College awarded degrees to 87 graduates during its commencement exercises the same day.

A crowd of more than 1,000 people filled Williams' Southerland-Mabee Center for the ceremony. The commencement address was delivered by Dawson Williams, a 1982 Williams graduate who currently

serves as a marriage and family counselor in North Little Rock.

Two graduates, Jenifer Roberts and Amanda Wright, were recognized for maintaining a perfect 4.0 GPA throughout their college careers. Roberts is from Jonesboro, while Wright is from Alton, Mo.

Other honor graduates were recognized as well.

## Leadership Profile for 2015 ABSC Nominating Committee

Members of the Nominating Committee for the 2015 Arkansas Baptist State Convention invite Arkansas Baptists to submit names of persons to that committee to consider when they bring the convention nominations for state committees and boards. This recommendation will not insure nomination, but the committee will consider each recommendation. The committee will not contact any person recommended until they approve the nominations. The Nominating Committee will hold its first meeting in June and needs all recommendations no later than June 1. Members of the committee are: Bill Bowen, Chairman; Edwin Hughes; Doug Wills; Gary Wise; J. D. Neeley; Paul White; Jeff Paxton; Craig Seals; and Kelly Jones.

### June 1 is the deadline for recommendations.

#### PLEASE PRINT

Nominee \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Minister ☐ Layperson Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Member of what church? \_\_\_\_\_

Association \_\_\_\_\_

#### Current leadership responsibilities

Professional \_\_\_\_\_

Civic \_\_\_\_\_

Church \_\_\_\_\_

Association \_\_\_\_\_

State or SBC Boards \_\_\_\_\_

#### Past leadership experience (within last five years)

State or SBC Boards \_\_\_\_\_

Association \_\_\_\_\_

Local Church \_\_\_\_\_

#### Personal

This person's greatest contributions, based on his or her past record, knowledge and experience, should be in the area of: \_\_\_\_\_

Is this person currently active in a local church? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Is this person able to be away from family and work for at least one or two days, three times a year? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Give the name and phone number of at least one person, other than his or her pastor or associational missionary, who knows of the nominee's involvement in Baptist life. \_\_\_\_\_

On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rank this person's understanding of and commitment to the Cooperative Program? (Circle) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (10 being the highest rating)

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

#### Board of Trustees

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

#### Committees

- ☐ Constitution and Bylaws Committee
- ☐ Convention Program Committee

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_  
(Name of person making recommendation)

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

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



# Faith & Culture

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

Romans 12:2 (ESV)

## Pew: Christians decline while 'nones' increase

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) – The number of Christians in America has dropped nearly 8 percent since 2007 while the number of religiously unaffiliated adults has increased by nearly 7 percent during the same period.

That's the finding of the Pew Research Center's 200-page study of "America's Changing Religious Landscape" released May 12. The survey of some 35,000 adults drew a variety of reactions from Southern Baptist leaders.

"The results of the survey communicate growing evidence that the greatest need in America is a spiritual awakening," Southern Baptist Convention President Ronnie Floyd told Baptist Press in written comments. "The time is now and the hour is urgent; our churches in this nation must come together in clear agreement, visible union and extraordinary prayer for the next Great Awakening and to reach America and the world for Christ."

"Simultaneously, we need to rise with the same urgency, having a vision to reach our

communities, towns and cities for Christ, returning to the priority of evangelizing, disciple-making and planting gospel churches exponentially," said Floyd, pastor of Cross Church in northwest Arkansas.

Pew's survey – conducted by phone June 4-Sept. 30, 2014, in Spanish and English – estimated a net decline of between 2.8 to 7.8 million Christians since a comparable survey in 2007. That translates to a drop from 78.4 percent of the U.S. population to 70.6 percent.

Most of the decline occurred among mainline Protestants and Roman Catholics, with each decreasing by approximately 3 percent as a portion of the population since 2007. For every convert to Catholicism in America, there are six former Catholics, according to the report.

Historically black Protestant denominations held steady between 2007 and 2014, and evangelicals decreased 0.9 percent as a portion of the population while increasing by some 2 million in terms of raw numbers.



Floyd



"Generational replacement" as Americans from predominantly Christian generations died and "religious switching" were two primary causes of the decline among Christians, the survey found. A full 42 percent of Americans have a different religion than they did in childhood – a percentage that accounts for switches between evangelical, mainline and historically black Protestantism.

Non-Christian religions have increased by 1.2 percentage points since 2007 to encompass 5.9 percent of American adults.

But the increase of the religiously unaffiliated population – dubbed the "nones" – was the "most dramatic" change, a Pew senior adviser told journalists during a May 12 conference call.

"This trend towards the unaffiliated has occurred among all age groups to some extent and among all the major racial and ethnic communities as well," said John Green, a Pew advisor and distinguished professor of political science at the University of Akron.

While 25 percent of the nones claimed to be atheists or agnostics in 2007, 31 percent claimed those designations in 2014. Over the same period, the percentage of Protestants who identify with Baptist denominations dropped from 41 percent to 36 percent.

"This study makes it clear ... that people who don't want Christianity don't want the almost-Christianity offered to them by traditions that jettison the historic teachings of the Church," said Russell Moore, president of Southern



Moore

## The Watercooler

**"The amount of time we spend focusing on worship music styles is a strong indicator that many have little understanding of the heart of worship. If we aren't careful, personal preferences overshadow purpose."**

– Tyler Edwards, *Relevant*

In an article for *Relevant* magazine titled "The Worship Wars Are Hurting the Church," Tyler Edwards, a pastor in South Carolina, argues that many churches and church members today have allowed worship to become more about a musical preference or tradition than a focus on praising God. "Worship is not a concert. It's not karaoke. Worship is not about us. It's about God," he wrote, adding that the New Testament example of worship is "not just about singing praises" but about "living a life of service."

Baptists' Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission.

"The churches that are thriving are the vibrant, countercultural congregations that aren't afraid to not be seen as normal to the surrounding culture. This report actually leaves me hopeful. The Bible Belt may fall. So be it. ... We've been on the wrong side of history since Rome, and it was enough to turn the world upside down," Moore said.

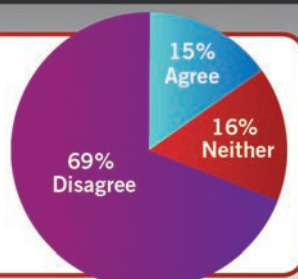


**Transformational Discipleship**  
Survey of 1,086 Canadian Protestant churchgoers

### TALKING ABOUT FAITH

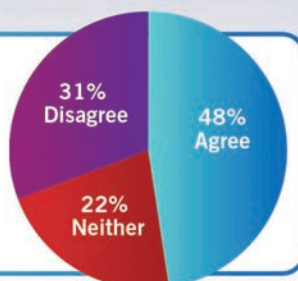
#### Unashamed

I am hesitant to let others know that I am a Christian.



#### Transparency

Spiritual matters do not tend to come up as a normal part of my daily conversations with other Christians.



See Transformational Discipleship Assessment at [tda.lifeway.com](http://tda.lifeway.com)

### Americans who have gay and/or lesbian friends compared to those who do not

#### Gay marriage should be legal.



#### Sex between people of the same gender is sinful, regardless of its legality.



Note: Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.



[LifeWayResearch.com](http://LifeWayResearch.com)



MAY 31, 2015

Many years ago I went to Camp Nile Montgomery for Boy Scout summer camp.

Those weeks culminated in a great and dreadful day. It was the day of the coming of the parents! Each week, Friday night was family night. My parents came both weeks to see what I had done all week.

Their coming meant that I spent much more time trying to scrub the dirt and sweat off of me on Friday afternoon than I had all week long. I also dug around in the bottom of the footlocker for the cleaner shirt, socks and shorts that were in their somewhere. After all, judgment was on its way to Damascus (Ark.), and I wanted to be ready to meet it.

Unfortunately, Mom and Dad could tell that I was faking my cleanliness.

I do not know if there were missed spots or if parents simply just know the habits of teenage boys, but there was no denying that I had not kept myself pure through the week, choosing to skip taking cold showers a few

days in the hopes that one long one would make up for it. Needless to say, it never did.

Malachi carried a warning to the people of Judah that was more important than parents night at the campground. Their purity was soon to be examined, but not by human eyes. The great and dreadful day of the Lord was coming, and just as fire was used to purify metal, so they would be purified.

It would not be a pleasant experience (Mal. 3:2). Judgment would come on those who were not pure before God (Mal. 3:5), and only those who feared Him would find healing (Mal. 4:2) in place of destruction.

What shall we do in the face of His coming?

First, we must let our fear turn our hearts to Jesus Christ. There is no escaping God's judgment, except through God's own Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

From there, as we try to walk in obedience, let us build a habit of daily walking in purity before the Lord.

## EXPLORE THE BIBLE

**A pure people**

MALACHI 3:1-7; 3:16-4:2

Doug Hibbard  
Almyra

## BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

**Stick with acceptance**

ROMANS 14:1-4, 13-19

Detra Thomas  
Fort Smith

Romans 14:17 says, "For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit."

If the kingdom of God equals righteousness, then when we play the role of judge, we are unrighteous.

God is clear in Scripture that He hates a prideful heart (Prov. 16:5). The Word tells us that God resists the proud but extends grace to the humble in 1 Peter 5:5 and James 4:6. Grace is God giving us the desire and ability to obey His voice.

So, if my choice is to be prideful and judgmental, I thereby lose God's favor and blessing. But, if I humble myself, I receive God's grace and a strong desire to obey His

Word, thereby giving up the robe and gavel!

Paul then says in Romans 14:19, "So then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding."

So, this Sunday, look around, asking the Holy Spirit to show you who needs an encouraging word, a smile or a hug.

JUNE 7, 2015

"Living life to its fullest" is a phrase that many people live their lives by.

Sadly, the pursuit of living a full life is often all that some people can think about. Many are prone to seek and strive to do what makes them feel happy or fulfilled, while in reality they are enslaved to living for themselves.

John the Apostle spoke of living life to its fullest in the opening words of 1 John. The context of living life to its fullest was not that he was seeking a bigger house, a weekend getaway or any other temporal thing. What John was seeking was to make sure that others knew about the Eternal One, in whom there is life.

As John presented the Truth to others, he experienced the fullness of joy (1 John 1:4).

Did John experience the absence of joy whenever he wasn't telling others about Jesus? No, instead, his joy in Christ was experienced at its highest level when he was sharing about Jesus. This is the same fullness of joy that Jesus spoke of belonging to

believers in John 15:11.

Believers can experience this same fullness of joy today in two distinct ways. First, our joy can be filled full whenever we see Jesus as being the Eternal One. In 1 John 1:1-3, John uses the idea of "seeing" Jesus not just to mean that he literally saw Jesus with his own two eyes, but that he recognized Jesus as being eternal.

Believers must recognize and celebrate that Jesus is truly the Eternal One.

Secondly, believers can experience the fullness of joy whenever we tell others about Jesus Christ. Whether reminding other believers, or sharing the gospel with someone who has never heard, we can join John in experiencing a joy that only comes from God.

The completion of joy is not attained by bigger salaries, better jobs or more stuff. It is experienced when one lives fully in Jesus Christ, the Eternal One.

Will you present the Truth to others and experience the fullness of joy?

## EXPLORE THE BIBLE

**The Truth presented**

1 JOHN 1:1-4

Zachary Tunnell  
DeWitt

## BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

**Accept your leadership role**

JOSHUA 1:1-9

Laura Macfarlan  
Siloam Springs

Serving faithfully as Moses' assistant prepared Joshua well to accept his new role to lead God's people into the Promised Land.

It seems unlikely to move from Egyptian slave to general of an army, but when God gives an assignment, He also provides the power of His presence to complete it.

Do you feel like an unlikely candidate for your assignment from God? Joshua's life is living testimony that God delights in using the unlikely. And perhaps when He chooses to use the unqualified and unlikely, He gets all the more glory!

Joshua led the people forward with victory guaranteed: The land would be theirs, and no enemy would be able to stand against them. The reason for their success is found in Joshua 1:5, where God says, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."

Perhaps these words from God sound familiar. Jesus said something similar to His disciples after issuing the Great Commission: "I am with you always, to the very end of the

age" (Matt. 28:20).

Just as God promised to be with Joshua, so Jesus promised to be with His disciples. You and I, as followers of Christ, can claim that promise for our own.

Joshua and the Israelites were to go in and conquer – claiming a physical kingdom. You and I are to go – and claim a spiritual kingdom.

Both situations are assured success because of the presence of God almighty.

Because of His presence, we are guaranteed victory – no matter how ridiculous or how daunting or how dismal the assignment.

What hard thing is it that God is calling you to do? What difficult assignment is He putting on your

to-do list?

Will you step out in confident faith – not knowing how, but knowing victory is assured – because you and God are doing this together?

Are you ready, like Joshua, to accept the role God has assigned to you?



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