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## Ark. flooding hits churches

Flooding across Arkansas causes damage and unleashes volunteers  
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# Ministering to the needy holistically

Johnny Turner, a volunteer at the First Baptist Church, Jonesboro, Care Center places items in bags to be distributed to needy families and individuals. The Care Center is one component of a holistic approach the downtown church has undertaken to assist the needy and homeless in its community. Recently, First Baptist became the home to Helping Underserved Belong (HUB), in partnership with the City of Jonesboro, community organizations and faith groups. The primary focus of HUB is to work with "individuals who are ready to make changes in their lives." Read the story on page 3.  
*Photo by Tim Yarbrough*

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**ABN**  
Arkansas Baptist News



## ABN Digest

Stories of interest  
to Arkansas Baptists

### Rogers named dean of students at Ouachita

ARKADELPHIA – Rickey Rogers, a 2002 Ouachita Baptist University graduate, has been named Ouachita's dean of students and director of residence life effective June 1.

Rogers' professional experience includes serving in residence life, student development, local church ministry and athletics. He holds a bachelor of arts degree from Ouachita with a major in physical education and minors in psychology and secondary education and a master of science degree in clinical mental health counseling from Henderson State University.

"I am extremely humbled by the opportunity to serve as dean of students and director of residence life at Ouachita," Rogers said. "My family and I love Ouachita Baptist University, and we are excited about Ouachita's future."

Rogers serves as Ouachita's campus sponsor for Fellowship of Christian Athletes. He is a deacon at First Baptist Church of Arkadelphia and a former board member for the *Arkansas Baptist News*. His wife, Lydia, also a 2002 Ouachita graduate, is a resident director in O.C. Bailey Hall and financial coordinator for First Baptist, Arkadelphia. They have three children, Rickey Jr., Reyna and Ryan.

Rogers succeeds Scott Haynes, who served as dean of students since 2012 and director of residence life since 2011. Haynes and his wife, Katie, have accepted English teaching positions in Africa.

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Rogers

### Volunteers respond

# Widespread flooding hits churches across Ark.

Caleb Yarbrough  
*Arkansas Baptist News*

POCAHONTAS – As the floodwaters rose, Arkansas Baptists responded.

Recent historic flooding throughout Arkansas, which caused extensive damage to some Arkansas Baptist churches and Camp Siloam in Siloam Springs and forced other Arkansas Baptist churches to cancel services, unleashed a torrent of disaster relief (DR) and local church volunteers to minister in the flood's soggy aftermath.

The failure of levees along the Black River in northeast Arkansas dumped flood waters into Pocahontas and surrounding communities May 3, resulting in the declaration of a state of emergency.

First Baptist Church, Pocahontas, canceled its Wednesday night services May 3 due to area flooding – displacing area residents and church members.

"Please continue to pray for the evacuees and all those affected by the flooding," First Baptist wrote on its website May 3. "The water has stopped rising but our community still has a long road ahead. Many families are still displaced and continue to need support. ... Be safe!"

While First Baptist facilities did not experience flooding, Shannon Baptist Church in Pocahontas saw around two feet of flooding in its facility, according to Eric Moffett, pastor of First Baptist.

The Current-Gaines Baptist Association (CGBA) DR feeding unit deployed to Pocahontas May 2 in advance of the levee failure. As of press time, the unit was stationed at 1405 Hospital Drive in Pocahontas and has been feeding victims and volunteers since May 3.

Don Settles, associational missionary for the CGBA, is serving as "blue cap" and leading the feeding unit's volunteers.

"We are unbelievably grateful for that (disaster relief) because that has taken a lot of pressure off of our church and other churches to care for people so that we can care

for some people in different ways," said Moffett. "We don't have to worry about feeding, and we don't have to worry about organizing mud-out units that really go above and beyond our expertise. We can point them toward those resources and then invest in other ways in our community."

Moffett said that First Baptist has been collecting and distributing cleaning supplies, including buckets, bleach and detergent, as well as fans and pumps, to help those affected by flooding to clean and dry out their homes. The church has also partnered with other local churches in staffing its shelter, which, as of May 9, was housing 30 people displaced by flooding. Members of First Baptist have also been volunteering with DR.

"The word of the last week for all of us here has been 'cooperation.' We have been cooperating not only with our disaster relief teams and with our convention, but also with all the other churches in town," said Moffett.



Moffett

Randy Garrett, Arkansas Baptist State Convention DR director, said the Pocahontas Mayor's Office initially estimated that more than 100 homes were impacted by floodwaters, with the possibility of more being affected due to the levee's failure.

"The governor has declared 36 of the 75 counties in Arkansas as disasters so we have a lot of work going on," Garrett said May 9. "Randolph County and Pocahontas are the battleground right now. We have our shower teams there; we have our incident command team there, and we're doing assessments."

Garrett said that assessment teams are being accompanied by trained DR chaplains who are available to talk with and share the gospel with those affected.

### Des Arc

Melvin York, pastor of First Baptist Church, Des Arc, said May 9 that a number of families in Des Arc and surrounding areas had been affected by flooding on the White River.

"Most of the major flooding



Floodwaters surround the Black River Baptist Association office in Hoxie. Recent historic flooding throughout Arkansas caused extensive damage to some Arkansas Baptist churches and Camp Siloam in Siloam Springs and forced other Arkansas Baptist churches to cancel services. Photo by Mike McCoy

has transpired on the east side of the river," said York. "The town proper is on the west side of the river, and we are on higher ground. ... There was a lot of sand-bagging and levee-building over the past several days."

As of May 9, York said that multiple highways in the area remained closed and that the Arkansas National Guard was still deployed to the area to aid in security and road closings.

"You can't get into town from the east side. So we have a lot of people boating across," said York. "They kept the school open this time so we have kids boating across to go to school."

"I have heard of about a dozen houses, at this point, that have been severely damaged," he said. "Everybody just got more prepared this time. ... This place has turned into a sand-bagging crazy place for about the past five or six days."

Local churches, including First Baptist, have been active in feeding flood victims, volunteers and National Guard personnel, said York.

### Camp Siloam

On April 29 Siloam Springs experienced flash flooding. Floodwaters damaged Camp Siloam's grounds and some of the camp's structures, according to Jason Wilkie, executive director of Camp Siloam.

"The most extensive damage is to the creek bed itself. There is a lot of erosion of the creek bank," said Wilkie. "We have these valleys that

drain into the creek (Little Beaver Creek) that runs into the camp. The flooding pulled gravel out of these valleys. ... There are probably 10 to 15 truckloads of gravel everywhere on the lawns."

Wilkie said the flooding eroded the bed and sides of the Little Beaver Creek to the point that gas, electric and sewer lines were exposed. A water main was broken, and an electrical pole fell and pulled power lines out of the camp's dining hall during the flooding as well. Two bridges collapsed, and the integrity of two other low-water bridges was compromised.

"The large worship center, for the first time ever, got three inches of water in the side conference room," said Wilkie. "The good news is that we are insured for flood. But flood insurance doesn't cover grounds, driveways and bridges. It only covers buildings."

The damage to the worship center was not enough to meet Camp Siloam's deductible, said Wilkie. He said that it will cost around \$20,000 to repair the creek, clean up the grounds and fix the damaged bridges on the campus. Wilkie said that the camp has never experienced this amount of flood damage before, and it will be difficult to get everything repaired before camp opens this summer.

Contact Caleb Yarbrough at [caleb@arkansasbaptist.org](mailto:caleb@arkansasbaptist.org). For more information on Arkansas disaster relief visit [absc.org/ministries/disasterrelief](http://absc.org/ministries/disasterrelief).



'We welcome those who come'

# FBC, Jonesboro, becomes HUB partner

Margaret Colson  
Arkansas Baptist News

JONESBORO – Soon after Chelsea\* walked out the doors of prison – embracing her freedom for the first time in a long time – she walked through the doors of Helping Underserved Belong (HUB) at First Baptist Church, Jonesboro, where she would be embraced by those committed to helping her get back on her feet.

HUB is a partnership of the City of Jonesboro with several local entities, including area churches, intent on connecting homeless or near-homeless individuals with resources needed to begin their journey out of homelessness.

The primary focus of HUB is to work with “individuals who are ready to make changes in their lives,” according to the City of Jonesboro website (jonesboro.org).

Sitting down with HUB volunteer Sherry Pierce, a member of Central Baptist Church, Jonesboro, Chelsea admitted that she had no money, no place to stay, no job. The response? “No problem.” Pierce, who understands, “It’s tough out there right now,” reassured the young woman, “There’s nothing we can’t help you with.”

For years, First Baptist, Jonesboro, a downtown church, has ministered to the homeless in Jonesboro. Bruce Venable is senior pastor of the church.

“We want to be invested in our community,” said Kristie Stokes, missions and community outreach pastor for First Baptist, Jonesboro.

“Our church has embraced the opportunities of being downtown,” she said.

Through its Care Center, the church provides clothing and groceries to those in need and serves hot meals four days each week to about 100 people each day.

Care Center volunteers “have been doing a lot of good



Sherry Pierce (left), a member of Central Baptist Church, Jonesboro, and Missy Threadgill, volunteers who serve at the First Baptist Church, Jonesboro, Helping Underserved Belong (HUB), center, assist HUB client Chelsea\*, who was recently released from prison. Kristie Stokes (below left), missions and community outreach pastor for First Baptist, stands outside the church's Care Center located in downtown Jonesboro. \*Last name withheld. Photo by Tim Yarbrough

for a very long time,” she said, but the volunteers realized that more could be done to serve those in need.

Homeless people often find themselves in a confusing maze of services scattered throughout the city.

most efficient and effective way to meet those needs,” said Emma Agnew, community services manager for the City of Jonesboro, in a press release highlighting the launch of HUB on April 4.

Still, it wouldn’t be right for a program designed to serve the homeless not to have a home of its own.

First Baptist, Jonesboro, had just the right space for HUB. The first floor of its Activity Center, adjacent to the church’s Care Center, was available and, with HUB’s launch in April, it became HUB’s home, allowing the congregation to “expand

its services” to those in need, said Stokes.

“We have the perfect location. It’s been a good fit, a really good fit. Our church opens its heart and its buildings to those in need,” she said.

Now, as homeless individuals seek services, their first point of entry is HUB, where they can receive help with documentation, such as birth certificates, marriage certificates and Social Security cards, as well as referrals for employment, housing, budgeting and

medical and dental referrals. Also, homeless individuals can pick up bus passes, have access to computers and telephones at HUB and can use the HUB address for mailing needs. Then, they can go right next door to the church’s Care Center for a hot meal, clothes and groceries.

HUB volunteers offer spiritual counseling to their homeless neighbors, with church members sharing about the hope found only in Jesus Christ. Because First Baptist, Jonesboro, has long been involved in serving homeless people through its Care Center, many of those served regularly attend Bible study and/or worship at the downtown church.

“We welcome those who come,” said Stokes. “This (homeless ministry) has been a part of who we are for many years.”

HUB is undergirded with a federal grant as well as donations from local individuals and groups.

Open for less than two months, HUB has already made a positive impact in the lives of numerous homeless people – people like Chelsea whose first step through the doors of HUB was her first step into a changed life.

\*Last name withheld.

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

## ABN Digest

Stories of interest  
to Arkansas Baptists

### Americans are fond of Bible, don’t read it

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – Americans have a positive view of the Bible, and many say the Christian Scriptures are filled with moral lessons for today.

However, more than half of Americans have read little or none of the Bible.

Less than a quarter of those who have ever read a Bible have a systematic plan for reading the Christian Scriptures daily. And a third of Americans never pick it up on their own, according to a new study from Nashville-based LifeWay Research.

It’s a small wonder many church leaders worry about biblical illiteracy, said Scott McConnell, executive director of LifeWay Research.

“Most Americans don’t know first-hand the overall story of the Bible – because they rarely pick it up,” McConnell said. “Even among worship attendees, less than half read the Bible daily. The only time most Americans hear from the Bible is when someone else is reading it.”

Almost nine out of 10 households (87 percent) own a Bible, according to the American Bible Society, and the average household has three.

But Bible reading remains spotty.

LifeWay Research surveyed 1,000 Americans about their views of the Bible and found significant splits in how familiar they are with the Christian Scripture. One in five Americans, LifeWay Research found, has read through the Bible at least once.

That includes 11 percent who’ve read the entire Bible once, and 9 percent who’ve read it through multiple times.

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# 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)

## The SBC and the crisis of identity

Interesting conversations abound when a bunch of Baptist communicators get together.

Recently, when members of the Baptist Communicators Association (BCA) gathered for their annual workshop in Florida, it was easy for me to spot the chiseled veterans from the relative newbies serving from the various state conventions, agencies and



### Pressing On

Tim Yarbrough

Phil. 3:14

Baptist newspapers that were represented.

It was easy because the number of "veterans" attending is a small group that dwindles with each passing year.

I joined what later became the BCA in 1990, a year after arriving as a young buck ready to change the world at the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission located in

Memphis, Tenn.

Today, there are only a handful left who have been members since before 1990. Many have retired or "been retired" from distinguished ministries at the International Mission Board (IMB), North American Mission Board (NAMB), state conventions and other entities.

While it's good to see the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) attempt to respond to changing times with initiatives such as the Covenant for a New Century adopted in 1995, there is no question the SBC as a whole has suffered extensive "brain drain" over the past 30 some odd years.

The Covenant for a New

Century, as you will recall, eliminated several agencies of the SBC and reassigned many ministries to other agencies.

Five agencies – the Stewardship Commission, the Education Commission, the Southern Baptist Foundation, the Southern Baptist Commission on the American Baptist Seminary and the Historical Commission – were completely dissolved with some of their ministries assigned to existing SBC agencies.

The Radio and Television Commission, Brotherhood Commission, and the Home Mission Board were merged into NAMB, a new agency, with their ministries reshaped into "a coordinated and uni-

fied approach to evangelizing North America."

The effects of these changes in the SBC continue to this day.

Just last year, for example, thousands of missionaries – along with veteran stateside communicators – left the field for early retirement from IMB. In 2010, the same thing happened at NAMB.

During the same period of time, practically every entity – with the exception of most of our seminaries – have changed their names. (Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary recently changed its name to Gateway Seminary).

See **IDENTITY** page 6

## 'Spiritual Prepper'

The first thing that turns your eye to Jake McCandless' "Spiritual Prepper" is the cover art of a man in a suit, wearing a vintage-looking gas mask. From that point, you, the reader, know you are in for something a bit different. McCandless asserts that his book is about "tapping into overlooked prophecies

to prepare you for doomsday."

Naturally, being concerned about doomsday will

draw you in to see just what you may have overlooked.

McCandless, a former Arkansas Baptist pastor who is executive director of Prophecy Simplified in Garfield, has chosen Matthew 24 as the prophecies that have been overlooked in the church of modern times. Since many Americans expect consistently blessed and free lives right up until the Rapture, he's right. We have read these passages, even had them preached to us, but the way we live parallels the warning: we overlook

them in our daily lives. In doing so, we run afoul of the old proverb that the one who does not read (and hearken) has no advantage over the one who cannot.

Twelve chapters are used to walk the reader through the challenges that Jesus assured us will come to our faith. Some of his illustrating

stories strike home better than others, though at times McCandless

fictionalizes events where he could have used realistic events instead. For example, he crafts a story about ISIS where there are documented stories that could have been used. It would have been stronger to do so, as he consistently refers back to that story as if it were true.

All told, McCandless offers good instructions throughout "Spiritual Prepper." The reader is challenged to expect persecution, to know the

See **REVIEW** page 6

### Review

Doug Hibbard



Cartoon by Gary Thomas

**Question: Which organization's policy has killed more humans?**



**"Choose life so that you and your descendants may live." - Deuteronomy 30:19**

THOMAS  
ARKANSAS BAPTIST NEWS



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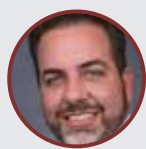
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## Serve one another



**Family Matters**  
Ben Phillips

The death penalty has been in the news the past few weeks along with a lot of debate. The purpose of this article is to share how I teach my family to wrestle with issues from a biblical worldview. My children are ages 20, 17 and 13. My goal as a dad is to discuss current topics in our culture and expose them to a strategy for formulating a biblical worldview that will help them make wise decisions.

We first discern what God's Word says about the issue. I consistently point my children to the Bible in shaping their worldviews. We look at what Scripture says about death and life with the goal of discerning biblical commands and principles.

Some key texts to consider are: Gen. 1:27; 3; 7:20-24; 9; Ex. 20:13, 21, 22, 35; Lev. 19:15; 20; 24; Num. 35; Deut. 1:17; 3:23; 6:23; 5; 17; 19:15-21; 21-24; Ezek. 33:11; Matt. 5:44; Mark 11:25; Luke 6:28; John 8; Rom. 12:19; 10:9-13; 13:1-7; Eph. 2:8-9; 1 Thess. 5:17, 25; 1 Tim. 2:1-4; 1 Pet. 2:13-17; Heb. 9:14; James 4:13-15. This list is not exhaustive.

Next, we discover what others say about the issue. I typically like to read what trusted godly leaders have to say regarding a particular issue. It helps me to see what biblical texts they reference and how they are applying those specific texts to a current situation. Ronnie Floyd, pastor of Cross Church in northwest Arkansas, wrote a blog April 24 which I would commend to parents, "10 Biblical Realities to Consider About Capital Punishment."

We then take time to discuss the issue. We discuss the pros and cons of particular viewpoints. We ask questions and encourage our children to ask questions to refine their biblical worldview.

Finally, I encourage my children to formulate their conclusions and decide what they believe. Many times it is similar to what I believe, but that's not because I have told them to believe that way. They come to their conclusions through a process of discerning, discovering and discussing so they can decide and own their faith.

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

# Direct impact through CP giving

One great distinctive we enjoy as Arkansas Baptists is giving to missions through a unified missions budget called the Cooperative Program (CP).

I vividly remember the excitement I had as the young pastor of a smaller membership church when I learned the impact of this funding conduit. We joined other Arkansas Baptist churches, more than 1,000 of which averaged less than 100 in Sunday school attendance, and created giving synergy that resulted in high impact missions support. Through a budget formula that was approved by messengers at the Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC) Annual Meeting, our church's financial gifts were divided so that they impacted thousands of missionaries, ministries, ministry students and church plants on the state and national levels. The ministries we supported had direct accountability and were governed by trustees.

It is important for Arkansas Baptists to understand that money given to missions through the CP does not go into some general, nebulous "pot."

There is a specific, defined formula that directs every penny given. Thus, money given to missions through the

CP is direct missions giving through that defined formula.

Your ABSC Executive Board staff feels strongly that, when you give through the CP, you give directly to support our ministries that serve the churches such as church planting, training, the state evangelism conference, etc.

For some of our agencies and institutions on the state and national levels, funding from the CP is a significant part of their budgets. For others, gifts from the CP are only part of their budgets, and they have been authorized to emphasize special offerings and seek private donors.

I am personally thankful for every penny that is given through the CP and view it as direct giving to fund ABSC ministries that serve our state. If you want to learn how your CP giving is allocated, please contact our office at 800-838-2272, ext. 5103. You can also read some current CP impact stories by visiting our website at [absc.org/cpsshare](http://absc.org/cpsshare).

I am as excited now, as when I was a young pastor, about the incredible missions synergy we create as Arkansas Baptists through CP ministries!

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



**Executive Directions**  
Sonny Tucker

## Find ways to share their stories

Recently I had the opportunity of sharing a few thoughts with the Fellowship of Retired Baptist Workers during their annual meeting at Park Hill Baptist Church in Little Rock. As I looked across the room, filled with men and women who have served God faithfully for more years than even I have been alive, I was overcome with a sense of awe at the stories that could be told: stories of the movement of God among God's people; stories of prayers answered; stories of lives being saved and transformed by the grace of God: stories of the love of a pastor for his people; stories of disappointment, heartache and struggle in ministry; but, all, stories of the faithfulness of God.

Stories are meant to be shared. Stories link the past to the present and become building blocks for community, belonging and identity. Stories shape us. Sadly, for most in our tiny corner of the world, stories do not seem to be as important as they once were. It seems like we are losing the art of storytelling, which means we are also losing the art of personal connections, especially intergenerational connections. This is true in families and also in the church.

This is where I believe stories can play a vital role, especially stories of the faithfulness of God. Let me offer a few words of encouragement to any senior adult saints reading this article. First, as you attend associational or Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC) meetings, be intentional in introducing yourself to a younger pastor or pastor's wife. Ask the pastor how you can pray for him, his ministry and his family. Get to know his wife. Share a story about God's faithfulness. You might just save a ministry, church or family.

During the past year and a half while I've been serving

as president of the ABSC, I've encountered several pastors who are discouraged and frustrated with the direction of their churches and ministries. And, I know there are others who remain silent who feel like throwing in the towel and just walking away. I've been there. I've experienced those struggles and felt those pains. Honestly, I don't think I would have made it to this point if it had not been for those senior saints God placed in my life at just the right time who shared with me their stories of the faithfulness of God.

As a pastor who loves his senior adults, let me also encourage you to stay active in your church. The church needs you. We need your wisdom. We need your example. I know that as we get older the type of service we perform in the church changes. Even now, my body cannot do some of the things I once did. When I lose my sanity and step onto a softball field, my mind always makes it to first base way before my body gets there. But, stories know no age limit. That's why they are so powerful.

So, please, for the sake of a generation that desperately needs to hear of God's faithfulness from those who have experienced God's faithfulness, find creative ways to share your stories.

And pastors, do not neglect the value of senior adults in your church. Learn their stories. Give them opportunities to share their stories. Find ways to capture their stories for future generations.

"Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever. Let the redeemed of the Lord tell their story" (Ps. 107:1-2, NIV).

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



**President's Perspective**  
Sam Roberts



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# How Trump's order impacts the pulpit

**O**n May 4, President Donald Trump signed an executive order intended to prevent the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) from enforcing the Johnson Amendment to the Internal Revenue Code.

In 1954, then Sen. Lyndon Johnson successfully pushed an amendment to the Internal Revenue Code through Congress. It seems Johnson was livid about a Texas non-profit group that had endorsed his opponent in his race for re-election to the Senate. The amendment was his way of settling the score.

The amendment to the tax code, which bears Johnson's name, prohibits nonprofit, charitable organizations – which, by definition, include churches and most religious and faith-based groups – from expressing support for or opposition to candidates for elective office or political parties. Loss of tax-exempt status is a potential sanction that could be imposed against a church for violating the Johnson Amendment. At the center of the debate is what many see as the muzzling of pastors and a denial of their free speech and freedom of religion when in the pulpit or speaking in an official or representative capacity for their churches.

It should be noted that the Johnson Amendment calls for no constraints – legal, ethical or otherwise – on churches and pastors, whether in the pulpit or out, from speaking to moral, cultural and philosophical issues. And this principle applies even when the particular issue makes it into the political arena. Churches and their leaders need not be reluctant to speak about matters of faith as they relate to the issues at the center of the so-called culture wars, provided their statements and actions are not intended to aid or hinder candidates for political office. It is only that kind of partisan political activity that the Johnson Amendment prohibits.

Many on my side of the reli-

gious liberty divide applauded the president's action. I am not certain that that serves our greater purpose. Do not misunderstand my larger point here. I remain a critic of the Johnson Amendment, but not because I think the pulpit is the proper platform from which to deliver political stump speeches. The Johnson Amendment is antithetical

## Faith & Ethics

Larry Page



to the First Amendment's guarantees of freedom of speech and freedom of religion. The law is almost certainly unenforceable; that is the reason the IRS has not taken significant steps to sanction a church for violating that law for more than 20 years. The consensus among the legal community is that the law is an unconstitutional infringement of free speech guaranteed by the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

An executive order can only suspend tentatively the law's enforcement and cannot repeal the Johnson Amendment; in fact, a subsequent president could rescind the executive order and mandate its enforcement. I would rather see President Trump exert his influence and encourage Congress to repeal the law. By repealing the Johnson Amendment, members of Congress and the president would send a clear message that we will not countenance the suspension of the freedoms of speech and religion for the sake of political expediency and petty recriminations.

However, whether the Johnson Amendment is repealed or its enforcement is just suspended by an executive order, pastors should consider the propriety of making statements endorsing or opposing candidates or political parties when in the pulpit or speaking in a representative or formal role for the church. A pastor at such times has a captive audience and is speaking with apparent authority, which might unduly influ-

See **PAGE** page 7

## ABSC Agencies

# OBU strategic planning report

**O**uachita Baptist University's planning committee, chaired by first-year President Ben Sells, recently released an interim report as part of the process of launching a new five-year strategic plan. The following overview provides an update on the planning process as the committee invites Arkansas Baptists' continued input.



## Ouachita Baptist

Trennis Henderson

and threats, and 5) Understood the preferred future for Ouachita through the 1,300 survey responses to two questions: "What should not change about Ouachita?" and "What should change about Ouachita?"

According to Sells, for Ouachita to do more good – both kingdom good and common good – the university must be better. To be

better, university leaders must dream a larger dream and think transformatively, not incrementally. In response to those realities, the planning committee has proposed six strategic directions:

1) Sustain Christ-centered identity; 2) Support committed faculty and staff; 3) Grow undergraduate enrollment to capacity; 4) Ensure transformative learning experiences; 5) Develop graduate and innovative programs, and 6) Strengthen partnerships with alumni and friends.

Based on responses from the extended Ouachita family, including our Arkansas Baptist partners, the planning committee will refine and ad-

just the strategic directions and develop specific goals that will give further definition to each. A final report and five-year plan, involving trustee participation at every stage of the process, is scheduled to be approved and released in fall 2017.

"The Ouachita mission, when considered in the light of the needs and hopes of this nation and world, is more relevant than ever before," declares the planning committee interim report. "We can imagine, Lord willing, graduating greater numbers of Ouachitonians who have been anchored in the context of our Christ-centered identity; attracted by undergraduate, graduate and other innovative programs; supported by committed faculty and staff; strengthened by partnerships with alumni and friends; and, transformed by their learning experiences to serve the purposes of God in their generation through their families, churches, communities and careers across the country and around the world."

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

# IDENTITY

*continued from page 4*

As communicators shared in Florida during a breakout session at the BCA annual meeting, discussion turned to a loss of identity in the denomination.

However, in spite of the many changes Southern Baptists have experienced since founding their denomination in Augusta, Ga., in 1845, many distinctives remain,

which I believe will continue to aggressively seek to further the gospel for generations to come.

While this space does not allow an exhaustive list, here are just a few of the denomination's distinctives to illustrate my point.

Southern Baptists:

- believe there is no salvation apart from Jesus Christ;
- are people of the Bible, which reveals the gospel message of redemption through Jesus Christ;
- are evangelical and

missional;

- are cooperative and adaptive;
- are independent, and
- are advocates and guardians of religious liberty.

Though Southern Baptists may have made changes that altered their identity over the years, they are still a people well-equipped to deliver the gospel message to a world so desperately in need of a Savior.

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

# REVIEW

*continued from page 4*

Word of God and to focus on Jesus above the distractions of this world. He uses Scripture plainly and with respect. As with any book, I would have

preferred the publisher used footnotes instead of endnotes, but that cannot be changed now. Much of the application is vague, but will serve well as discussion-starting material for Bible study groups.

*Spiritual Prepper* by Jake McCandless. 2017 WND Books. 229 pages, softcover.



# Religious reaction to Trump executive order mixed

WASHINGTON (BP) – Religious liberty advocates are commending President Donald Trump's new executive order to protect faith beliefs and practice, but others say the order doesn't go far enough.

President Trump signed an executive order to protect faith beliefs and practice in a cere-

mony May 4 on National Day of Prayer in a ceremony at the White House Rose Garden. Religious liberty advocates commended the action, but some said it fell short of what is needed.

The executive order says:

– The administration's policy will be to enforce vigorously

“robust protections for religious freedom” in federal law.

– The Department of Treasury, which includes the Internal Revenue Service, will not penalize a person, house of worship or other religious organization for speaking “about moral or political issues from a religious perspective,” thereby providing relief from a six-decade-old law known as the Johnson Amendment.

– The secretaries of three federal departments will consider revising rules to protect the freedom of conscience of religious objectors to the abortion/contraception mandate imposed by former President Barack Obama's administration.

The executive order does not include protections for faith-based and other federal contractors who have established their employment practices on a biblical sexual ethic, and it does not protect individuals and institutions from being penalized by the federal government for acting in support of their belief that marriage is only between a man and a woman.

Those types of protections were reportedly included in a draft executive order leaked to

some news media in February.

“This is a step forward in the right direction for preserving and forwarding one of our greatest freedoms, religious liberty,” Ronnie Floyd, pastor of Cross Church in northwest Arkansas and former president of the Southern Baptist Convention, wrote in a May blog post.

Floyd added, “The overreach of government regarding religious liberty issues has not just been apparent, but accelerating. It has been a major and growing issue, concern, and threat for all people of faith.”

President Trump's signing of the executive order coincided with a commemoration of National Day of Prayer. Former SBC President Jack Graham was among the religious leaders who prayed and stood behind President Trump while he spoke and signed the order.

The Johnson Amendment, named after then-Senator and future President Lyndon Johnson of Texas, altered the federal tax code in 1954 to bar 501(c)(3) organizations “from directly or indirectly participating in, or intervening in, any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for elective

public office.”

The amendment – and the way it has been wielded by liberal organizations especially – has caused confusion for many churches and pastors regarding what freedoms they have to address elections or even issues and the public policies affecting them.

Some supporters of repealing the Johnson Amendment believe pastors and churches – and not the federal government – should be the ones to decide what they say from the pulpit regarding elections while also believing pastors and churches should not make endorsements. A LifeWay Research survey conducted in September 2015 showed 79 percent of Americans think it is inappropriate for pastors to endorse a candidate in a church meeting.

## PAGE

*continued from page 6*

ence some of the church's members in matters best left to be decided by them exercising their personal autonomy. Is that a proper role for a pastor? Shouldn't the pulpit be reserved for what it was intended – the desk from which the gospel is expounded and Christ is exalted – and not a platform for a political stump speech?

Look, our churches should not resemble political parties, candidates' political action committees, or offshoots of special interest groups. Our calling is higher, nobler and far more important – eternal consequences hang in the balance – and we must zealously guard against doing or saying anything that would tend to relegate the gospel to anything short of its preeminence in our undertakings.

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



President Donald Trump signs executive order to protect faith beliefs and practice in a ceremony May 4.

## SBC Baptist Association Emphasis Week May 21-28, 2017

The ABSC Executive Board is thankful for the gospel impact happening through the ministry of our 42 Associations of Arkansas Baptist churches.

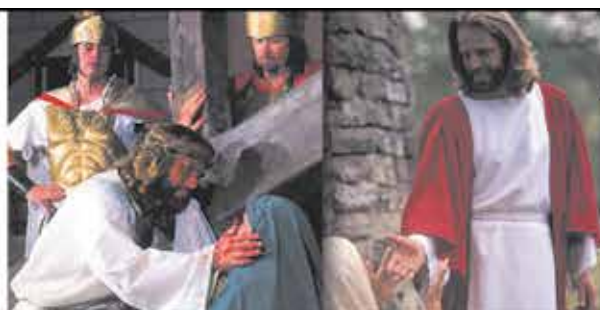
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## Prayer Gathering Aug. 28-29

LITTLE ROCK – The Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC) is calling Arkansas Baptist ministers to gather for the fourth annual Statewide Prayer Gathering Aug. 28-29 at Cross Church Pinnacle Hills in Rogers.

The prayer event is “an opportunity to unite under one roof for a time of prayer for revival and spiritual awakening,” according to state convention

organizers.

The schedule for the event is 6:30-9:30 p.m., Monday, Aug. 28, and 8 a.m. to noon, Tuesday, Aug. 29.

“Please pray that pastors will be encouraged and inspired by this time of focused prayer and will go back and lead their congregations to be more committed to prayer,” states an email sent by the ABSC executive team.

## Pastor drowns in Little Red River

HEBER SPRINGS – Lenny Curtiss “Lenny” Brewer, 54, pastor of Toltec Baptist Church in Scott, drowned in a kayaking accident May 5 on the Little Red River, authorities reported.

Rescue crews from the Cleburne County sher-



Brewer

iff's office, the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission and others responding to the scene recovered Brewer's body shortly after 9 p.m. He had left to go kayaking about three hours earlier, the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* reported.

Though still under inves-

tigation, Brewer's death is believed to be an accident, Cleburne County Sheriff Chris Brown said. It is the first drowning reported in Cleburne County in 2017.

Brewer had served as pastor of Toltec Baptist since December 2015.

Read obituary on page 10.

### Sam Moore Evangelistic Ministries



479-381-1170,  
sam@evangelistsammoore.com

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## Leadership Profile for 2017 ABSC Nominating Committee

Members of the Nominating Committee for the 2017 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: Don Phillips, chairman; Erby Burgess, Kelly Jones, Ralph Mashburn, Jeff Paxton, Tad Rogers, Phillip Smith, Mac Stroud, and Brian Whitney.

### June 1 is the deadline for recommendations.

#### PLEASE PRINT

Nominee \_\_\_\_\_

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

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

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

Association \_\_\_\_\_

#### Current leadership responsibilities

Professional \_\_\_\_\_

Civic \_\_\_\_\_

Church \_\_\_\_\_

Association \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

Association \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

#### Personal

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

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

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

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

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

#### Board of Trustees

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

#### Committees

- ☐ Constitution and Bylaws Committee
- ☐ Convention Program Committee

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_

(Name of person making recommendation)

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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



# Baptists lead during National Day of Prayer

WASHINGTON – Arkansas Baptists joined tens of thousands across the nation at churches, public parks, courthouses, community centers and government buildings May 4 for the 66th annual National Day of Prayer.

In the nation's capital, a number of Southern Baptist leaders joined President Donald Trump at a National Day of Prayer ceremony at the White House, where the president signed an executive order designed to enforce vigorously the "robust protections for religious freedom" in federal law (see related stories, pages 6-7).

"O Lord, Listen! O Lord,

Forgive! O Lord, Hear and Act!" was the organized cry drawn from Daniel 9:19, that birthed perhaps hundreds of thousands of individual prayers for various aspects of society, including governmental sectors and leaders, families, media, businesses and religion, according to organizers of the National Day of Prayer. "For Your Great Name's Sake," also taken from Daniel's prayer, is the national theme.

Ronnie Floyd, senior pastor of Cross Church in northwest Arkansas and former president of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), was one of sev-

eral Southern Baptist leaders attending the ceremony at the White House.

Later that evening, Floyd led worshipers in prayer during the National Day of Prayer service held in the U.S. Capitol building.

Floyd spoke out against abortion and racial prejudice, the Christian Post website reported, asking God "to forgive us of the deplorable, the wicked sin of killing the unborn and justifying it and rationalizing it."

Floyd also called on God to help the church "model racial unity, racial reconciliation and racial love," decrying injustice

and "the wicked sin of racism," the Christian Post reported.

"Days like today remind me that as long as America humbles herself before God, pleading out of sincere hearts to truly know and serve Him, we will remain a 'nation under God.' On this solemn occasion, I pray America will experience a return to God's truth that will lead to a new revival and spiritual awakening that will impact our generation," said Floyd, the Christian Post reported.

"I'm thankful for all this administration has done over its first 100 days to advance religious liberty, protect the

unborn, and to strengthen the role of faith in America. In the first 100 days of a president, evangelicals have never had a stronger relationship with the White House," he said.

SBC President Steve Gaines called Christians to prayer and offered "A Prayer for America."

"As Southern Baptists we believe that we should pray and ask God to bless our nation and its leaders," Gaines said in introducing his prayer. "We should pray for our leaders and for every citizen of our nation, asking the Lord to forgive our sins and to guide us in His will in the future. We should also confess the sins of our nation and beseech the Lord to be merciful and gracious to every person in our country."

Congress established the national event by a joint resolution in 1952 under then-President Harry S. Truman, amending the resolution in 1988 under then-President Ronald Reagan to set the annual event on the first Thursday in May. Every annual observance is accompanied by an official proclamation by the sitting president.

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[absc.org/bgr](http://absc.org/bgr)

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## Obituaries



Brewer

**Lendon "Lenny" Brewer**, 54, of Scott, died May 5.

Brewer served for nearly two years as pastor of Toltec Baptist Church in Scott.

From 1994 to 2000, Brewer was a youth pastor in northern Missouri, serving four of those years as a youth pastor for six rural churches that joined together to gain what they could not afford alone.

Brewer returned to Arkansas in 2000 to serve as youth pastor at Roberson Memorial Baptist Church in Lonoke, then later senior pastor and youth minister, assisted by his wife, Sherry.

In 2006, he began serving as pastor at Grace Baptist Church in Rogue River, Ore.

Brewer also served at the Northwest Baptist Convention and led its evangelism conference in 2014.

He is survived by his wife, a daughter, a son, four grandchildren, his father and three sisters.

Funeral services were held May 13 at Valley Baptist Church in Searcy. Burial followed at Holly Springs Cemetery in Searcy.

**Johnny T. Farmer**, 91, of Little Rock, died April 24.

He was a charter member of Archview Baptist Church

in Little Rock.

Farmer was a retired teacher of history and economics at Mills High School in Little Rock, as well as retired from the U. S. Air Force.

He is survived by his wife, Dora, four children, five grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

His son, Al Farmer, serves on the executive and administrative team of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention.

A graveside service with military honors was held April 27 at Pinecrest Memorial Park in Alexander.

**William Paul Huitt**, 68, of Hermitage, died May 2 in El Dorado.

His son, Ty Huitt, serves as pastor of Lake Ouachita Baptist Church in Mount Ida.

Huitt worked for Milam Construction Company for 20 years and at South Arkansas Community College for five

years in maintenance.

He served in the U. S. Marine Corp, with one tour in Vietnam.

Huitt was a member of Hermitage Baptist Church in Hermitage where he was a deacon and a Sunday school superintendent.

He was preceded in death by a brother and two sisters. He is survived by his wife, Gwen, a son, a daughter, two brothers, a sister and six grandchildren.

Funeral services were held May 6 at Hermitage Baptist Church in Hermitage.

## Church life

**Bono Baptist Church in Greenbrier** will celebrate its 100th anniversary homecoming at 10:30 a.m. June 4.

Emil Turner, retired executive director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention in Little Rock, will be the

guest speaker.

A catered catfish dinner will follow. For dinner reservations or more information, email [connect@bonobaptist.com](mailto:connect@bonobaptist.com) or call the church office at 501-679-0509.

The **Faith Riders chapter from South Main Baptist Church in Crossett** will host Biker Sunday at 10:30 a.m., May 21.

All bikers are welcome to attend.

For more information contact the church office at 870-364-8459.

**Tumbling Shoals Baptist Church in Tumbling Shoals** hosted its annual wild game supper on March 9, where 300 attended.

Live music was presented by The Other Side.

The keynote speaker for the evening was Steve "Wildman" Wilson, TV personality who

is a member of the Arkansas Tourism Hall of Fame.

## Milestones

Tim Hobbs, along with his wife, Susie, will be honored May 28, in celebration of his 25th anniversary as pastor of First Baptist Church in Branch.

There will be a special time of celebration during the 10:50 a.m. worship service, followed by a potluck lunch.



## Houseparents needed: Baptist Home for Children, Monticello.

These full-time positions include salary, housing, medical and life insurance and paid leave. For more information, contact: Randy Luper at 870.367.5358 or [rluper@abchomes.org](mailto:rluper@abchomes.org).



# Classifieds

## PASTOR

Lambrook FBC seeking a **bi-vocational pastor**. Send resumes to: Johnny Williamson, PO Box 544, Elaine, AR 72333.

FBC Gentry, AR seeking **full-time pastor**. Please send resume to: [fbcgentrypastorsearch@gmail.com](mailto:fbcgentrypastorsearch@gmail.com) or mail to FBC Gentry, Search Committee, Box 116, Gentry, AR 72734.

FBC Clarendon, AR, is seeking a **full-time pastor**. Send resumes to FBC Search Committee, PO Box 324, Clarendon, AR 72029, or email resumes to [jrbreynolds@gmail.com](mailto:jrbreynolds@gmail.com).

## OTHER STAFF POSITIONS

Bono Baptist Church (SBC) in Greenbrier, AR, is searching for **bi-vocational part-time youth minister**. Experience in leading worship is preferred but not required. Email resume to - [connect@bonobaptist.com](mailto:connect@bonobaptist.com).

The Otter Creek Community Church is

prayerfully seeking a **part-time minister of music**. Accepting resumes through June 15, 2017. Submit resume to: [info@theocchurch.com](mailto:info@theocchurch.com). Attention: Music Search Committee.

FBC Marion seeking **part-time associate student minister**. Includes duties with middle school and worship arts ministries. Send resumes to [students@firstmarion.org](mailto:students@firstmarion.org) by June 15.

First Baptist Church of Sherwood, Arkansas, is seeking a **full-time children's minister**. Resumes received through May 31. Send to First Baptist Church, Children's Minister Committee, 701 Country Club Rd. Sherwood, AR 72120 or email response to [fbcsherwood.org](mailto:fbcsherwood.org).

FBC Farmerville, La., seeks **staff persons with knowledge, education and/or experience in worship/music leadership, student ministry and/or Christian education**. Email resume to [fbcfarmerville@yahoo.com](mailto:fbcfarmerville@yahoo.com) or call 318-368-3848.

A healthy mixed-generational church is looking for a **full-time student pastor**. Church focuses on small groups, worship, evangelism and missions. Send resumes to:

[Resumes@Waterlooad.org](mailto:Resumes@Waterlooad.org) or mail to Waterloo Road Baptist Church, 3100 E. Waterloo Rd., Edmond, OK, 73034.

Levy Church, NLR, seeks **full-time worship/executive pastor**. Send resumes to: [steveniner@levybaptist.com](mailto:steveniner@levybaptist.com).

Trinity Baptist Association, consisting of 32 churches in Poinsett County, is searching for God's man who has at least 7 years of leadership experience in an SBC entity to serve as our **associational missionary**. Send resumes to [tbasearchteam@gmail.com](mailto:tbasearchteam@gmail.com) or PO Box 106, Trumann, AR 72472. We will receive resumes until June 5, 2017.

**Full-time minister to youth and families**, Grand Avenue Baptist Church, Hot Springs, AR. Will work closely with senior pastor to meet the needs of a growing church. Email resume to [mwiles@cablelynx.com](mailto:mwiles@cablelynx.com).

First Baptist Harrisburg, AR is seeking a **full-time minister of music and youth**. Email resume to [kellyjones@harrisburgfbc.com](mailto:kellyjones@harrisburgfbc.com). Job description available at [www.harrisburgfbc.com](http://www.harrisburgfbc.com).

Pleasant Grove Baptist Church is looking for a **part-time children's director** for our growing GROVE KIDZ MINISTRY. E-mail your resume to [ckinzler@pleasantgrovel.org](mailto:ckinzler@pleasantgrovel.org).

Seeking **bi-vocational worship leader** committed to a blended worship service. Send resume by 6-1-17 to Trinity Baptist Church, 20707 Chicot Road, Mabelvale, AR 72103 or to [trinitybaptist.mabelvale@gmail.com](mailto:trinitybaptist.mabelvale@gmail.com).

South Main Baptist Church, in Crossett, AR is prayerfully seeking a **part-time youth minister**. You may send a resume to [smbcsecretary@windstream.net](mailto:smbcsecretary@windstream.net), or mail to South Main Baptist Church, PO Box 430, Crossett, AR 71635.

Immanuel Baptist, El Dorado, seeks a **full-time children's director**. If interested, contact 870-862-4264 or [srickler@ibceldorado.com](mailto:srickler@ibceldorado.com).

Southside BC, Paris, seeks a **FT or PT worship leader**. Must be able to lead a blended worship service. Ability to lead and work with praise band and choir is required. Send resume to [billy@ssbchurch.org](mailto:billy@ssbchurch.org).

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

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

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

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

Place your classified here!  
Visit [arkansasbaptist.org/ads](http://arkansasbaptist.org/ads)  
to use our easy online form!



MAY 28, 2017

I remember sitting in my high school geometry class and listening to the instructions for a test that our class was about to take. I have never been a math guru, and geometry was way over my head. As my teacher placed the test on my desk, I began to scan over it. Each problem contained a given or some information to solve the problem. However, all I could ask myself was, "Now what do I do?"

Over the course of Christianity, as people are saved, they probably ask themselves, "Now what do I do?" They are told to study God's Word and to pray. Likewise, after Jesus' crucifixion, the disciples were dazed and confused. One can only imagine that they were asking themselves the same question. Thankfully, Jesus left specific instructions for all believers to follow in Matthew 28:16-20.

First, in Matthew 28:19 (NIV), we are called to "go and make disciples." Jesus did not make a suggestion for us to consider. He commanded us to go. For some people that means traveling

to distant lands and facing great risk for the sake of the gospel. For others, it means sharing with your neighbor, the grocery clerk or the mail carrier. Either way, it means we are to be active in spreading the gospel to a lost world.

Second, in Matthew 28:19 (NIV), Jesus said, "baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

Although baptism does not save you, it is an act of obedience and symbolizes that we are one with Christ.

Third, in Matthew 28:20, Jesus called for us to teach new converts. Too often, new converts are not disciplined by seasoned Christians. It is vital that mature Christians pour into the lives of new be-

lievers and help them grow in their faith so that they may disciple others.

Christians never have to be confused about what to do. The instructions that the Lord Jesus told His disciples more than 2,000 years ago still holds true today. We are to go and make disciples around the world.

### EXPLORE THE BIBLE

## What do we do now?

MATTHEW 28:16-20



Vickie Lee  
Sherwood

### BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

## Life on mission

1 CORINTHIANS 9:19-27



Daniel Johnson  
Dover

only under the law of Christ. Paul went so far as to not accept payment for his service to the Corinthian church in order to keep remuneration from being a gospel barrier, even though he, like the other apostles, had every right to have his material needs taken care of by those whose spiritual needs he served.

For the sake of love and the gospel, Christians must overcome alienating barriers to the gospel and build bridges to the lost around them, just like Paul did. This may mean initiating a friendship with neighbors, overlooking differences in personal preferences with a co-worker who shares a cubicle, becoming involved with a family member's hobby, or something else

entirely. For older believers, it may mean recognizing the difference between actual biblical mandates and extra-biblical traditional practices; for younger believers, it may mean honoring the traditions of older generations. Whatever a Christian can do in order to help others hear and understand the gospel, the Christian must do.

JUNE 4, 2017

Every person born has the opportunity to choose a path in life. We can either choose to follow Christ and His teachings, or we can choose to walk in the ways of the world. People who choose to place their faith in Christ are not afraid to embrace godly wisdom from God's Word and fellow believers.

Psalms 1 contrasts the life of a faithful person to that of an unfaithful person. It teaches us how to live a Christ-filled life.

People influence us daily. As believers, it is important to surround ourselves with people who are grounded in Christ. In Psalm 1:1 (NIV), the psalmist wrote that we are "blessed" when we do not "walk in the way of sinners." Our close friends should be those who give godly advice and who encourage us in our Christian walks.

However, Christian friends are not all that we need. It is clear in Psalm 1:3 that God's Word provides godly wisdom for our lives. The Bible is God's personal message to us. In Psalm 1:2, we are told

we should "delight" in its teachings and "meditate" all day on each promise held within this Book. God's Word, hidden in our hearts, can see believers through times of joy and times of difficulty. The Word of God is active.

In contrast, those who choose to surround themselves with wicked people will be blown away like the chaff of grain.

Unlike the believer who stands strong, the unbeliever is pulled in different and harmful directions. In Psalm 1:4-5, the psalmist explained that the wicked have no direction or purpose in life. On the outside, it may seem they have it all together and are successful. However, their hearts are empty, and one day they will face eternal death.

For Christians who live by the wisdom of God's Word and godly counsel of Christian friends, our lives are fruitful and full of purpose. We can stand strong in the midst of trials and come out of the storm with our faith stronger and unshaken.

### EXPLORE THE BIBLE

## The path

PSALM 1:1-6



Vickie Lee  
Sherwood

### BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

## Love like Christ

JOHN 15:9-17



Daniel Johnson  
Dover

Children love to pick flowers. They like the lovely roses on a bush, the yellow daffodils in the field and the dandelion weeds in the yard; type and quality don't matter to kids. A flower is a flower. They enjoy playing outside and picking a beautiful bouquet of flowers to excitedly bring inside for mom. As attractive as flowers are, though, as soon as one is picked, its beauty begins to fade. Once the colorful petals have been severed from the nourishment provided by the roots, in a day or two, the vibrant plant wrinkles, fades and browns.

Christ instructs His followers to abide in Him. Just as a flower is connected to the plant and nourished through the roots, so too Christians are connected to Christ and nourished by the Holy Spirit through Scripture. When believers abide in Him, they obey His commands, bear fruit and prove themselves to be authentic. As the flower's beauty is enabled by connection to the plant, the beauty of believers is found in the work of the Lord in their lives.

One of Christ's commands is to love others. Loving others means enjoying the good times and being there through the bad. It means being willing to give out of one's own resources in order to meet the needs of another.

Christ's sacrifice on the cross is the ultimate expression of love; He laid down His life so that others could live. Believers have benefited from this love and should, in turn, show love to others.

As Christians abide in Christ, spend time in God's Word, walk by the Spirit and spend time with God's people, the love of Christ will be manifested in their lives. They will be characterized by compassion, patience, empathy and generos-

ity. When there is an opportunity to celebrate, they will celebrate. When there is a need they can meet, they will meet it. When love requires sacrifice, they will sacrifice. Christians love others as Christ first loved them, and this love will be shown in their relationships.



# Celebrate God's work in Arkansas during May

## PRAY more

"...pray without ceasing"  
(1 Thess. 5:17, ESV)

## GIVE more

"...It is more blessed to give than to receive"  
(Acts 20:35, ESV)

## GO more

"...you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all  
Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth"  
(Acts 1:8, ESV)

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was the highest ever in our state's history.

The Cooperative Program funds Gospel missions and ministries such as:



**Cooperative Program**

### \$21 million

- Arkansas Baptist Disaster Relief
- Church planting
- International Mission Board (IMB) missions efforts
- North American Mission Board (NAMB) missions efforts
- Block parties, medical clinics, and other community missions

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more—more missions,  
more ministry—so more  
souls can be saved.  
Thank you, dear friends,  
for sharing the vision and  
the cost to share Jesus."**

*J.D. "Sonny" Tucker*

Dr. J.D. "Sonny" Tucker  
Executive Director, ABSC

- Arkansas Baptist agencies: Arkansas Baptist Children's Home, Arkansas Baptist Foundation, Arkansas Baptist News, Camp Siloam
- Arkansas Baptist Executive Board
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