



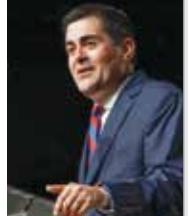
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'A joyous ring' resounds at 43rd Handbell Festival

One hundred and fifty Arkansas Baptists representing 11 churches across Arkansas gathered at Geyer Springs First Baptist Church, Little Rock, March 11 to participate in the 43rd Annual Arkansas State Handbell Festival. Keith Chandler, worship and music consultant at the Georgia Baptist Mission Board, was guest clinician for the event. Photo by Caleb Yarbrough



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Arkansas Baptist Convention



Stories of interest
to Arkansas Baptists

Bellevue Baptist reaches \$1 million in CP gifts

BRENTWOOD, Tenn. (BP) - Bellevue Baptist Church has become the first church in the Tennessee Baptist Convention to send \$1 million through the Cooperative Program over a 12-month period.

In early March, the Tennessee Baptist Mission Board received a check for \$83,333 that brought Bellevue's total giving through the Cooperative Program to \$1 million since last April 2016.

Records from the Tennessee Baptist Mission Board indicate that Bellevue's gifts through the Cooperative Program have quadrupled over the past six years.

Steve Gaines, pastor of the Memphis-area church and president of the Southern Baptist Convention, said he tells Bellevue members that when they give to the church budget they support many different ministries.

"The Cooperative Program is the way we support the budget of the Southern Baptist Convention. When we give through the Cooperative Program we support seminary students, foreign missions, schools like Union University and every kind of ministry you can imagine," Gaines said.

"The Cooperative Program is a great way of broadly investing in the kingdom of God. We do it without reservation," he added.

Randy C. Davis, president and executive director of the Tennessee Baptist Mission Board, expressed appreciation.

Davis recounted a call he received from Gaines in 2010 to inform him that Bellevue had decided to begin increasing their Great Commission giving through the Cooperative Program.

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

'Inspire' challenge: 'Be more like Jesus'

Margaret Colson
Arkansas Baptist News

CABOT - About 650 women, representing 140 Arkansas Baptist churches, were challenged to be More Like Jesus at the annual Inspire women's conference held March 11 at First Baptist Church, Cabot.

"Inspire provides a meaningful time for Arkansas Baptist women to gather for worship, fellowship and Bible study. This year we challenged the women to look more like Jesus in every area of life," said Andrea Lennon, women's ministry specialist for the Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC), and member of the ABSC's evangelism and church health team.

Keynote speaker Rachel Lovingood focused on the conference theme More Like Jesus, saying, "Sometimes it's easy for us to get tangled up in, 'Here's Who Jesus is; here's how He acts.' What would it be like if we really believed the truth of Ephesians 3:20? The more we become like Jesus, the higher we will raise our

expectations of Who God is and what He can do. We won't limit Him by Who we think He is or what we think He has done before."

Attendee Amanda Bunden, from Oak Grove Baptist Church, Pocahontas, said, "Rachel Lovingood has been the keynote speaker for the past two years. I could listen to her all day. She speaks from her heart and is relatable to what life throws at us. I always leave ready to share all that I have learned."

In its fourth year, the women's conference, sponsored by the ABSC evangelism and church health team, has more than doubled in size since it began with about 300 attendees in 2014, with many Arkansas Baptist women eagerly anticipating the annual event from year to year.

"Inspire means a lot to me. It is a day where I can connect with others and refocus on my relationship with Christ," said Bunden.

In addition to hearing from keynote speaker Lovingood, attendees, who represented



Rachel Lovingood speaks during the Inspire women's conference March 11 at First Baptist Church, Cabot. Lovingood has been the conference's keynote speaker for the past two years. Cory and Stephanie Epps of First Baptist Church, Benton, led worship during the event. Photo by Caleb Yarbrough

women of all ages and stages of life, enjoyed worship led by Cory and Stephanie Epps, from First Baptist Church, Benton, and selected from a variety of breakout sessions.

"I think that every Inspire participant would agree that there is something special about this gathering of women. The love in the room for Jesus

and others is tangible. God is moving among the women of Arkansas. Women are hungry for authentic relationships that make a difference in their lives. These types of relationships are developed at Inspire women's conference," said Lennon.

Contact Margaret Colson at margaret@arkansasbaptist.org.

Former Baptist camp faces zoning violations

GLORIETA, N.M. - The former Glorieta Baptist Conference Center, sold by LifeWay Christian Resources in 2014 to a non-profit group, has fallen into disrepair and now faces numerous environmental and zoning violations brought forward by the Santa Fe County Land Use Department.

According to an article published March 1 in the local *Santa Fe Reporter*, heaps of garbage now litter the camp where thousands of Southern Baptists for years gathered for inspiration and spiritual renewal.

Steven Hsieh, writing for the *Reporter*, said, "Helicopter footage aired on KOB 4 (TV) Monday night doesn't offer a flattering view of the camp. Frankly, at least part of the land is a dump. But the camp's owners never applied to zone any of the 2,900-acre property as a landfill. Nor did they seek the necessary permits to construct zip lines, lake slides,

diving boards, a coffee shop, extreme biking trails or a skeet shooting range, all of which are offered as amenities at the Christian getaway."

Glorieta 2.0, the nonprofit that purchased the camp from LifeWay, now faces potential fines for



violating laws related to development, zoning, littering and public nuisance,

according to a Feb. 22 cease-and-desist letter sent to the camp from the Santa Fe County Land Use Department, according to the *Reporter*.

A dispute regarding the former Baptist conference center emerged in 2013 when Kirk and Susie Tompkins of Little Rock filed a lawsuit claiming the property near Santa Fe,

N.M., was not properly transferred, and that LifeWay, Glorieta 2.0 and Southern Baptist Executive Committee leadership improperly handled the sale. The couple lost a lease on property on which they had purchased a vacation home.

Since 2013 numerous judgments have been made regarding the property,

with the Tompkins continuing to pursue the matter in court.

At the time of the sale of the property to Glorieta 2.0, 65 churches, institutions and individuals owned structures on year-to-year leased lots at Glorieta. Thom Rainer, LifeWay president, reported at the 2014 Southern Baptist Convention Annual Meeting that

Glorieta 2.0 offered to extend the year-to-year leases or purchase structures built there for up to \$100,000, which all but a handful of leaseholders accepted.

Glorieta Baptist Conference Center opened in 1952. David Weekley, a wealthy home-builder from Texas, chairs the board overseeing Glorieta 2.0, the corporation that took over the property. The same board oversees a camp in Texas called Camp Eagle, according to the *Reporter*.

Numerous changes at the camp have been undertaken by the new owners, including the construction of a zip line, slides, diving boards and decks around the property's lake.

Trails, previously open to hikers, were closed to the public, and neighbors living near the property complained of water shortages due to the camp's increased pumping, according to the *Reporter*.

Moore: 'The conscience of the SBC?'

Caleb Yarbrough
Arkansas Baptist News

REMINISCENT of political and theological battles of the conservative resurgence, the future of Southern Baptists' lead ethicist Russell Moore is anything but certain.

Moore, president of the Southern Baptist Convention's (SBC) ethics and policy arm, the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC), has received high praise from

NEWS ANALYSIS

many who see his emphasis on social justice and racial reconciliation as a welcome redirection from the SBC's past.

However, in the past year, Moore's critics have lambasted his sharp attacks on Donald J. Trump during the 2016 presidential election, and the ERLC's lobbying for religious liberty by signing an amicus brief in favor of a Muslim group's right to build a mosque in New Jersey.

Among those who have questioned Moore about the amicus brief involving the mosque was Arkansas pastor John Wofford of Armored Baptist Church, Armored (near Blytheville), at the 2016 convention annual meeting in St. Louis, Mo.

Wofford asked how a

Southern Baptist could support the rights of Muslims in the United States when "these people threaten our very way of existence as Christians and Americans."

In a response, Moore told Wofford, "What it means to be a Baptist is to support soul freedom for everybody. ... The bigger issue is the fact that we have been called to the gospel of Jesus Christ; a government

that has the power to outlaw people from assembling

together and saying what they believe, that does not turn people into Christians, that turns people into pretend Christians and it sends them straight to hell. The answer to Islam is not government power. The answer is the gospel of Jesus Christ and the new birth that comes from that."

Moore's answer at the annual meeting resulted in a hardy ovation.

Trump criticism

The 2016 presidential election resulted in more controversy for Moore, who criticized both major party candidates – stating he could "not in good conscience" vote for either. Moreover, Moore was critical of what he called "self-identified evangelicals" who strongly

aligned themselves with then-Republican candidate Trump.

In a March 2016 op-ed piece published in *Christianity Today*, Moore wrote, "When Christians face two clearly immoral options, we cannot rationalize a vote for immorality or injustice just because we deem the alternative to be worse. ... This side of the New Jerusalem, we will never have a perfect candidate. But we cannot vote for evil, even if it's our only option."

Continuing to come under fire by some Southern Baptist leaders, Moore used a blog post Dec. 19 to apologize for "possible offenses he caused following remarks he made leading up to the presidential election."

"I remember one situation where I witnessed a handful of Christian political operatives excusing immorality and confusing the definition of the gospel," Moore wrote. "Pastors and friends ... told me when they read my comments they thought I was criticizing anyone who voted for Donald Trump.

"I told them then, and I would tell anyone now: if that's what you heard me say, that was not at all my intention, and I apologize. There's a massive difference between someone who enthusiastically excused immorality and



Russell Moore, president of the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, speaks during the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in June 2016. *Baptist Press photo*

someone who felt conflicted, weighed the options based on biblical convictions, and voted their conscience."

'Prophetic minority'

In his first address as president of the ERLC held at Capitol Hill Baptist Church in Washington in 2013, Moore described Southern Baptists

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ABN Digest

Stories of interest
to Arkansas Baptists

House makes the Bible Arkansas' 'official book'

LITTLE ROCK – An Arkansas House of Representatives resolution makes the Bible the official state book of Arkansas.

The resolution was included in the more than 550 bills and resolutions introduced during the current legislative session.

Rep. Dwight Tosh (R-Jonesboro) introduced the resolution that states that the Bible is "considered by many to be a book of truth" and the laws contained in the book form the "basis upon which our modern civilization is structured."

The resolution was adopted by the House March 9, according to Larry Page, executive director of the Arkansas Faith and Ethics Council.

"It is a House resolution, not a joint resolution, so it will not be going to the Senate for consideration. As a resolution it is not a law or statute that is binding; it is just a statement of the will of the House of Representatives," said Page.

The governor of Tennessee vetoed a similar bill in April 2016 that would have made the Bible the official state book.

Sheffield, Bond assume new positions at ABSC

LITTLE ROCK – Two staff changes were announced recently by J.D. "Sonny" Tucker, executive director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC). Jimmie Sheffield has assumed the position of assistant to the executive director. David Bond will assume the position of executive administrator. "These are two incredibly gifted men, and we will all benefit from their great ability serving on the executive and administrative team," said Tucker.



A Tyson Foods tractor-trailer rig prepares to transport a load of hay to cattle owners following devastating wildfires in Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas.

1,000 bales of hay located in Missouri, 900 in northern Louisiana, and the remaining 1,100 in Arkansas.

Garrett said the primary need at this time is for driv-

ers with tractor-trailer rigs and flatbed trailers to haul the hay to Oklahoma. Individuals interested in assisting with the relief effort may email dradmin@absc.org.

Arkansas DR to assist hay transport to Okla.

LITTLE ROCK – Arkansas Baptist disaster relief (DR) is playing a key role in assisting cattle ranchers following devastating wildfires in Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas.

With more than 3,000 bales of hay donated by Arkansans and other surrounding states, now the challenge is getting hay to cattle ranchers impacted by the disaster. With the wildfires depleting the food supply, ranchers are in desperate need of hay for their cattle.

"Ranchers in our neighboring states are hurting, and I am excited to see Arkansans stepping up to help," said Randy Garrett, Arkansas Baptist DR director.

The DR team of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC) is coordinating the transportation of donated

hay in the relief effort. Several companies, including Tyson Foods, and individuals from Arkansas Baptist churches have already transported loads of hay. Love's Travel Stops have contributed fuel for some of the hay transports.

"The destruction was widespread, burning over one million acres across the three states," Garrett said. "Some ranchers lost everything."

Donated hay is being distributed from locations around Arkansas and surrounding states including rural areas of Brinkley and Fort Smith, southwest Missouri and northern Louisiana.

The hay is being transported to Knowles, Okla., where it is to be processed and delivered to ranchers in Oklahoma and Kansas. There are around

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Editorial & Opinion

The Church and the rise of modern liberalism

I believe our country has been in what I call "a metamorphosis of liberalism" for much of my life.

Post-war America from 1945 to 1960 saw phenomenal economic growth, which solidified the United States' position as the world's richest and most influential country.

We had an automobile boom, the housing boom, the creation of a national interstate system of travel, and we experienced the rise of new forms of technology and communication like television.

As our country grew economically and the Baby Boom dramatically expanded our population, so did our government, and along with it came "modern liberalism."

Wikipedia describes the rise of liberalism in the U.S. this way:

"Modern liberalism took shape during the twentieth century, with roots in Theodore Roosevelt's New Nationalism, Woodrow Wilson's New Freedom, Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal, Harry S. Truman's Fair Deal, John F. Kennedy's New Frontier, and Lyndon B. Johnson's Great Society."

Liberalism today impacts public discourse and society in ways unimagined just a few years ago – resulting in condoning and even promoting public sin.

As Wikipedia further points out, modern liberal philosophy strongly endorses public spending on programs such as education, health care and welfare and addresses what it believes are "impor-

tant" social issues such as inequality, "voting rights for minorities, affirmative action, reproductive and other women's rights, support for LGBT rights, and immigration reform."

Equality and civil rights are good when pertaining to women and minorities and such. Equality and civil rights enter the realm of modern liberalism when extended beyond God's design for humankind

and condone mainstream immoral behavior such as same-sex marriage.

According to an online dictionary, the definition of liberal is "open to new behavior or opinions and willing to discard traditional values."

Conversely, the same dictionary defines conservative as "holding to traditional attitudes and values and cautious about change or innovation, typically in relation to politics or religion."

Of course, it's the progressives – even inside the Church – who are quick to point out that conservatism in the church makes it rigid and unwilling to change and adapt to new ideas and societal trends while progressivism (which I believe, by the way, is the same as liberalism) provides adaptation and openness, allowing the church to cast a wider net.

The problem with this position is there is such a thing as absolute truth.

Churches today that embrace societal norms and even government actions that go against God's design do not embrace the Truth found in

Scripture, and they set themselves adrift to embrace practically any "feel good" doctrine or belief.

When you consider this, it is easier and more palatable to understand why the conservative resurgence in the Southern Baptist Convention was necessary.

While not everyone agreed with the way the conservative resurgence was carried out – including this writer – the drift toward liberalism in our own denomination made it necessary for a course correction.

My study of mainline Protestant denominations and their decline is evidence of how the creep of liberalism

can destroy what was established for God's glory.

Mainline Protestants were a majority of all Christians in the United States until the mid-20th century, but now they constitute a minority among Christians.

What denominations are considered "mainline"? While this is not necessarily an exhaustive list, they include American Baptist Churches in the USA, the Episcopal Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Presbyterian Church (USA), the United Church of Christ and the United Methodist Church.

The bottom line is this: Liberalism and progressivism

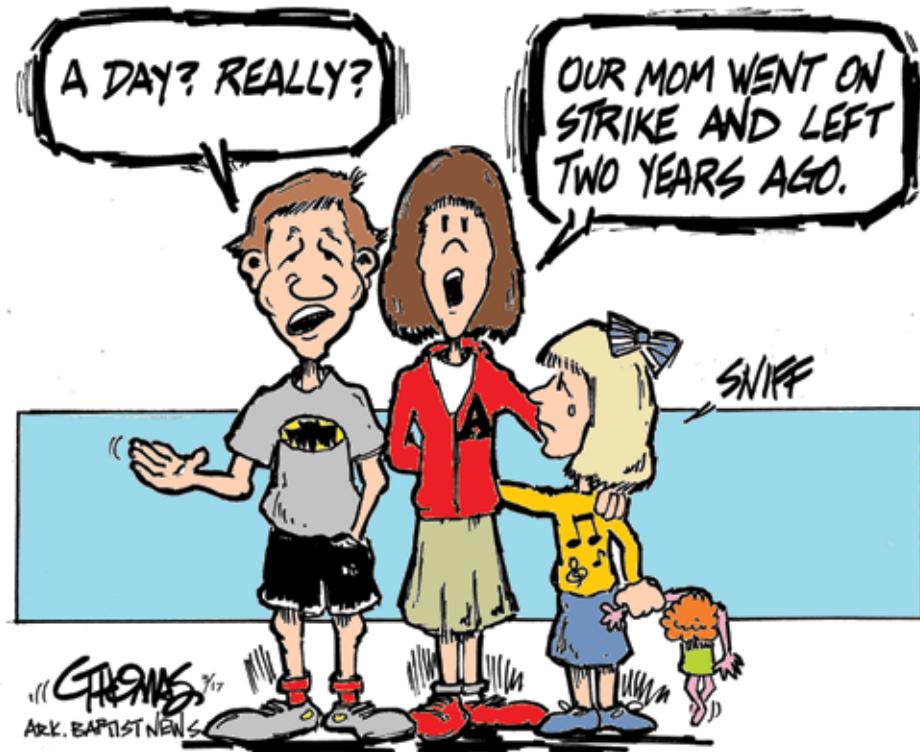
aren't cool terms and ideologies that should be embraced by followers of Jesus Christ.

Rather, consider yourself to be a proud Christian conservative, holding onto the Truth of the Word of God, "so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ" (Eph. 4:14-15, ESV).

Tim Yarbrough is editor/executive director of the Arkansas Baptist News. Read more commentary at arkansasbaptist.org.

Cartoon by Gary Thomas

**March 8, 2017 - International Women's Day
"A Day Without A Woman"**



Volume 116, Number 6
USPS08021
Member of the Association of State Baptist Publications
Arkansas Press Association
Evangelical Press Association

Telling the story of
Arkansas Baptists since 1901

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Arkansas Baptist News (ISSN 1040-6056) is published bi-weekly except the last issue of the year (25 issues) by the Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine, Inc., 10 Remington Drive, Little Rock, AR 72204.

SUBSCRIPTION rates are \$7.75 per year (Every Resident Family Plan), \$8.75 per year (Group Plan), \$15 per year (Individual). Arkansas Baptist News, 10 Remington Drive, Little Rock, AR 72204; phone 501-376-4791;

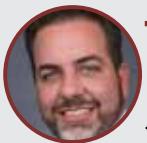
toll-free 800-838-2272; email: abn@arkansasbaptist.org. Periodical Postage paid at Little Rock, AR.

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Pray for your neighbor



Family Matters
Ben Phillips

The signs of God's creation are evident: pollen floating through the air, green grass poking through the brown undergrowth and longer days filled with sunshine all reveal that winter has passed and spring has arrived. Neighbors who were cocooned in their houses during winter are now walking and spending more time outside.

As believers, we should see spring as a time to connect with our neighbors. Jesus said that the second greatest command was to "love your neighbor." There are many ways to love your neighbor where you live. One of the simplest ways is to pray consistently for them.

We were one of the first families to move into our neighborhood 10 years ago. At first, I knew everyone who moved in and made relational connections, but now, there are close to 100 homes, and I do not know all my neighbors. I still try to get out and make some connections and build relationships, but I struggle.

I've discovered a helpful resource to learn who my neighbors are and to pray for them by name every day. Through the website pray4everyhome.com, you can identify your address and email so that you receive a daily email listing five neighbors by name and their address so that you can pray. This tool will help you get to know and pray for your neighbors by name.

Sometimes I have a busy spell, where I miss praying for some of my neighbors, and I receive a kind email letting me know that someone is praying for me.

Take advantage of the nicer weather and go for a walk in your neighborhood and pray for your neighbors. Initiate conversations, and ask your neighbors how you can pray for them. Praying consistently for your neighbors will enable you to see God at work answering your prayers. Praying will open up opportunities for ministering to your neighbors in times of need and sharing the gospel. As you pray and love your neighbors, you'll see signs of God at work in people, transforming marriages and families in your neighborhood.

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

A call to reach the nations: Part 2

It is refreshing to see the commitment level of Arkansas Baptists to missions. Our churches and church leaders display a deep, abiding desire to fulfill the Great Commission from their doorstep to the ends of the earth. I am blessed by a continual stream of praise reports from pastors and churches who are engaged in local, state, North American and international missions.

There is also a deep heart cry of prayer and passion in Arkansas for the 10/40 window where billions live without access to the gospel. The International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention has done extensive work understanding and identifying the people groups of the world. They define an Unreached People Group (UPG) as any ethnic group which is usually 2 percent or less evangelized, without an indigenous, self-propagating Christian church movement sufficient enough to evangelize the rest of the nation. They define an Unengaged, Unreached People Group (UUPG) as an ethnic group with no evangelical church planting strategy underway at all. We must do all we can to continue to increase our commitment of prayer, giving and participation in this international missions focus.

We must also be particularly aware of the international populations that God is sending to Arkansas. We must



Executive Directions
Sonny Tucker

focus more intently not only on the international student populations as mentioned in part one of this article, but also on the international populations with permanent residence in our state. Though we are presently gathering more data on international populations in Arkansas, we know of at least nine UPGs and two UUPGs in central Arkansas alone! Our missionaries have very little to no access to their home countries. Yet, God has blessed us with an opportunity like never before to have them living in our state where we have access to share the gospel with them without restrictions or fear of persecution.

The missions team and the church planting team of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention are working to gather information on these people groups, which includes identifying churches in Arkansas that may have already established international connections or have adopted these particular people groups. I ask Arkansas Baptists to get this on their spiritual radar screens and to begin praying intently for open doors, effective strategies and local church response.

As Arkansas Baptists, we have a God-given responsibility and accountability to engage these internationals with the life-changing gospel. Let's seize this moment!

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

Let's be champions of the CP

I love Arkansas Baptists, and today I celebrate with my Arkansas Baptist brothers and sisters the incredible financial generosity of Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC) churches in 2016.

As you have probably already heard or read, in 2016 the ABSC recorded the highest ever giving to both the Dixie Jackson Arkansas State Mission Offering and the Cooperative Program (CP)! Dixie Jackson gifts reached an all-time high at \$1.6 million. Our CP gifts hit the \$21 million mark for the first time in the history of our Convention. Both of these milestones are to be applauded. As we know, increased giving to Dixie Jackson results in more baptisms, more church starts and more opportunities for ministry and evangelism among the unengaged, unreached and underserved in Arkansas. Increased CP giving results in greater opportunities to take the gospel to the nations through both the North American Mission Board and International Mission Board, as well as increased support for our other Southern Baptist agencies and institutions. Increased giving is a win for the kingdom!

Thank you, Arkansas Baptists, for your tremendous generosity in giving through your local church. Wouldn't it be great if in early 2018 we can say we set an all-time giving record to both Dixie Jackson and the CP in 2017? Let's do this, Arkansas Baptists!

I am a product of the CP. I learned to value and love the CP through church training union at Black Oak Baptist Church. Now, I might not agree with every decision made by an agency of the SBC, and through the years I haven't. Matter of fact, I have distanced myself and even spoken in opposition to some decisions. But a decision of an agency or institution has never led me to waver in my support of the CP. Why? Even with its flaws, the CP is the best

President's Perspective
Sam Roberts

method we have for cooperatively taking the gospel to the nations.

Recently, I have been grieved by the actions of some Southern Baptist churches and state conventions in withholding or escrowing their CP gifts due to a disagreement they have with an SBC agency leader or two. Now, I'm a firm believer and supporter of the autonomy of the local church. Each church has the freedom to determine whom they call as pastor, how they are structured and how they can best fulfill the Great Commission. I will go to my grave defending the autonomy of the local church. Personally, I believe the CP is a vital tool in our faithful fulfillment of

the Great Commission as Southern Baptists. First Baptist Church, Stuttgart, gives 20 percent of our undesignated gifts to the CP. I am grateful that God has graciously blessed our congregation, and in turn, we have faithfully supported the CP. Should the economy tank, of course, we would have to reevaluate all areas of our giving, including CP gifts. However, it's going to take something much more serious than an SBC agency leader saying or doing something I might disagree with for me to lead the church to intentionally lessen the impact our CP gifts have in taking the gospel to the nations.

Yes, we need to hold our leaders to a high level of accountability, but we also need to recognize that they are human. So, we extend grace where grace is needed most. And when our leaders speak biblical truth that exposes a sinful flaw in our lives, let us be grateful for their courageous leadership and confess our own sinfulness.

Above all, Arkansas Baptists, let's celebrate a tremendous year of generous giving and continue to be champions of the CP!

Sam Roberts, senior pastor of First Baptist Church in Stuttgart, is serving a second term as president of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention.



COOPERATIVE PROGRAM

Abortion 'vital' to PP mission; leaders seek to defund it

WASHINGTON (BP) — Planned Parenthood's rejection of a White House offer to maintain federal funding if it drops its abortion business demonstrates how important the lethal procedure is to the organization, Southern Baptist leaders say.

The informal proposal and the refusal — reported March 6 by *The New York Times* — came as Congress and President Trump consider legislation to cut funds for the country's scandal-plagued, leading abortion provider. Both a budget bill and a new health-care replacement measure proposed in the House of Representatives would slash funds for Planned Parenthood, which receives more than \$500 million annually in government grants and reimbursements.

Planned Parenthood's top officers were unequivocal in their opposition to eliminating abortion after the *Times* reported the outreach to the organization's allies.

"Planned Parenthood is proud to provide abortion — a necessary service that's as vital to our mission as birth control or cancer screenings," tweeted Cecile Richards, president of the Planned Parenthood Federation of America (PPFA) March 6.

The rejection of the offer reveals "that without abortion, there would be no Planned Parenthood," Southern Baptist ethicist Russell Moore, president of the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC), said in written comments.

PPFA "is not a 'health-care' organization but a storefront for an industry that devalues human life and exploits families and communities," said Moore.

"This is just another example of why Planned Parenthood deserves not a penny of taxpayer funding," he said. "I pray that we will see the day soon when federal support of



Planned Parenthood and the abortion industry is seen as a piece of history from a bygone, more morally confused time."

R. Albert Mohler Jr., president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, said the development shows PPFA is "monomaniacally committed to abortion. They are the central agency of the culture of death in this society."

"[W]hat Planned Parenthood is saying here is that their values are the values of abortion," Mohler said on the March 8 episode of "The Briefing,"

his weekday podcast. "To what extent? To an extent that they will put at risk half a billion dollars of taxpayer money in annual funding because they are so committed to abortion."

In another Twitter response March 6, PPFA's Richards said, "We won't back down in the face of threats or intimidation, or turn our backs on the patients who count on us. Not today, tomorrow, not ever."

Dawn Laguens, PPFA's executive vice president, tweeted March 6, "Offering money to Planned Parenthood to abandon our patients and our values is not a deal that we will ever accept."

"Also, say it with me folks: Abortion is health care," Laguens tweeted later in the day.

In acknowledging the offer, President Trump told the *Times* March 6, "As I said throughout the campaign, I am pro-life and I am deeply committed to investing in women's health and plan to significantly increase federal funding in support of non-abortion services such as cancer screenings. Polling shows the majority of Americans oppose public funding for abortion, even those who identify as pro-choice. There is an opportunity for organizations to continue the important work they do in support of women's health, while not providing abortion services."

I've got a Siloam story to tell you," said McKenzie Hamilton as she came by our booth at the Lead>Defend Conference at the University of Central Arkansas in Conway.

"I love Siloam stories," I replied, thinking the reason I love Camp Siloam stories is because they usually are about God having a big impact on someone's life.

Hamilton, a junior at University of Arkansas at Fort Smith, shared with me she was volunteering as a group leader at a Disciple Now (D-Now) at Kibler Baptist Church, Alma. On the first night of the D-Now, the girls recognized Hamilton from her work at Camp Siloam.

On the last night of the D-Now, the girls sat down for their end-of-the-night group discussion. Hamilton

said she decided spontaneously to tell testimonies, "I told mine, and the home host, Lindsey Holt, shared hers," said Hamilton. "Then all the other girls opened up."

Some of the girls shared their stories about how they accepted Christ; others opened up about struggles or how God had taken them out of situations. It was a powerful night, she said.

"All the girls came closer together as a group because they had shared their stories. The cool thing was, almost all of the girls were telling about how they had experienced Christ for the first time at Camp Siloam," said Hamilton.

But there was one girl who didn't have a testimony.

"The next morning when we were at worship, a girl came up to Lindsey," said Hamilton. "The girl told Lindsey she realized she didn't have a story to tell."

After talking with Holt, the girl accepted Christ.

When I heard that story, I thought of Revelation 12:11 (NKJV), which says, "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death."

I am repeatedly amazed at how Camp Siloam is a place where God is authoring stories and making overcomers. This will be our 94th summer; we are praying that God would send so many lost campers to Siloam this summer that we would see 15 percent of our campers make professions of faith, which would be a 5 percent increase over our highest on record.

Currently, registrations are the highest they have been in my eight summers here. I can't wait to see what God is going to do!

Jason Wilkie is executive director of Camp Siloam, which is located in Siloam Springs.

'I've got a story to tell'



Camp Siloam

.....

.....

shared their stories. The cool thing was, almost all of the girls were telling about how they had experienced Christ for the first time at Camp Siloam," said Hamilton.

On the last night of the D-Now, the girls sat down for their end-of-the-night group discussion. Hamilton

We don't want your money

I love attending the Arkansas Baptist State Convention's (ABSC) Annual Meeting each fall to see familiar faces and hear what Arkansas Baptists have been up to the previous year. I am always encouraged to see how God is

using the ABSC and moving across our state. However, during these meetings, I overhear some of the unfortunate misperceptions about the Foundation and why we exist.

"You don't want to talk to them; they just want your money."

I am always saddened when I hear the various forms of that misperception directed at the Foundation's ministry. While it is true that the Foundation is very much involved with the financial matters of many Arkansas Baptist ministries

and churches, the Foundation does not want your money. We want to see more money in the hands of ministries we all love and support as well as see God's people blessed by carrying out the various forms

of biblical financial stewardship. Put another way, the Foundation is here to serve as a resource to help churches and individuals deploy assets to advance kingdom causes in the most efficient manner.

Moreover, the Foundation has taken proactive steps over the past few years to eliminate this misperception by:

- Distributing more than \$447,000 of the proceeds from the sale of our office building to ABSC Cooperative Program ministries;

- Removing all direct administrative fees for charitable accounts invested in our common funds;

- Providing free consulting for churches regarding capital

campaigns;

- Providing free investment administration and oversight for churches, institutions and ministries;

- Restructuring our staff by focusing on servant roles and spiritual gifts; and

- Changing our policies to not allow any direct gift to the Foundation from a trust, estate or charitable instrument.

These steps have collectively allowed us to focus on the Foundation's ministry while removing possible conflicts that could be a hindrance to the services we provide.

Again, it is the intent in this series of articles to debunk some misunderstandings about the Foundation's purpose and the services we provide. If you have any questions about the Foundation, please email us at info@abf.org.

Dillon S. McClain, an attorney, is vice president of the Arkansas Baptist Foundation.



Baptist Foundation

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Thomas wins Williams' first NAIA National Championship in wrestling

TOPEKA, Kan. - Demetrius Thomas, a freshman from Ferguson, Mo., won Williams Baptist College's first NAIA National Championship in wrestling with a 10-2 victory by decision March 5. Thomas, who came in as the five seed, beat third-seeded Ceron Francisco convincingly.

"I am at a loss for words. Demetrius is exactly what we want in a wrestler and student-athlete. I cannot sell him short on how hard of a worker he

is. He shows up and works incredibly hard every day. He glorifies God with his actions and always is the first to encourage and help out his teammates," said Kerry Regner, Williams head wrestling coach.

The Missouri native opened up the bout strong, with a takedown and near fall in the first period, getting an early 6-1 lead. The second period was fairly uneventful, as Francisco earned the only point on escape. This set up the final

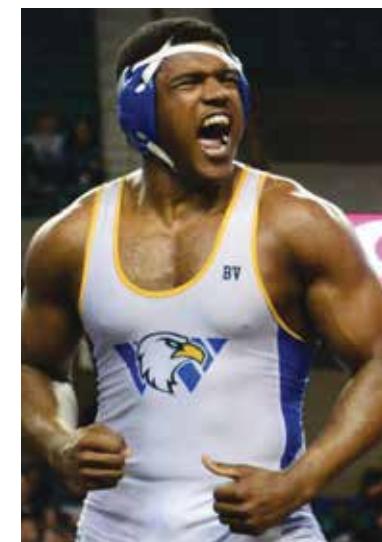
frame with Thomas leading 6-2. He had also accumulated over a minute's riding time, which, if maintained, would give him an extra point.

Thomas used that advantage in the third period by scoring three points. One escape and one take down would be plenty. Adding the riding time, he finished with a 10-2 major decision victory.

He becomes the first National Champion at Williams since the 1992-93 women's bas-

ketball team won the NCCAA National Championship. It is the first NAIA National Championship in school history.

"This is an incredible honor. All glory has to go to God. I could not be here without the impact He has had on my life. It blows my mind to be a National Champion. I am so honored to be able to wrestle at Williams, and I have the best teammates and coaches around," said Thomas.



Demetrius Thomas, a freshman from Ferguson, Mo., won Williams Baptist College's first NAIA National Championship in wrestling with a 10-2 victory by decision March 5.

MOORE

continued from page 3

as a "prophetic minority," an obvious allusion to and critique of the moral majority which came to prominence in the 1980s as the Christian right and the Republican Party formed a political alliance.

Many Baptists who supported Trump during the course of the 2016 campaign felt that Moore's critical commentary of the Republican nominee did not follow the majority sentiment within the denomination and showed Moore to be an elitist, unwilling to compromise on a candidate's character in order to secure important political victories such as conservative appointments to the Supreme Court and other key positions throughout the government.

Former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee, who is a past president of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, weighed in with comments for townhall.com, "I am utterly stunned that Russell Moore is being paid by Southern Baptists to insult them."

Ronnie Floyd, immediate past president of the SBC and pastor of Cross Church in northwest Arkansas, told *The Washington Post* March 13 that he disagreed with Moore's tone.

"I have no problem with a minister articulating concern over an issue. But at the same time, there's a way to do it. ... It's a matter of being able to do it and keep respect for everyone who may disagree," said Floyd.

Will Hall, editor of the Louisiana *Baptist Message* newspaper, and a strong critic of Moore and his criticism of Trump, said in a 2016 editorial that many of Moore's comments throughout the campaign were disrespectful and did not represent those of the average Southern Baptist.

Escrowing CP a concern

A decision by Prestonwood Baptist Church in Plano, Texas, to escrow its Cooperative Program (CP) funds "due to concerns about the SBC" gained the attention of leaders of the SBC Executive Committee, which initiated two study committees to investigate the action. Prestonwood contributes about \$1 million annually to CP.

In a February 2017 article in the *Baptist Message*, Mike Buster, Prestonwood's executive pastor, cited "various significant positions taken by the leadership of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission that do not reflect the beliefs and values of many in the Southern Baptist Convention" as the church's reason for withholding funding to the SBC's general mission fund.

Frank Page, president of the SBC Executive Committee, was quoted in *The Post* March 13 article that more than 100 churches had threatened to cut their CP funding as a direct result of "displeasure" with Moore. The article, written by Sarah Pulliam Bailey was titled "Could Southern Baptist Russell Moore lose his job? Churches threaten to pull funds after months of Trump controversy."

The article, published in

advance of a March 13 meeting between Page and Moore, implied that Page could call for Moore's resignation. Following the meeting, Page said of himself and Moore, "We fully support one another and look forward to working together on behalf of Southern Baptists in the years to come."

Page also cleared up confusion regarding the claim that he could have asked, for Moore's resignation during their meeting: "I ... informed (Bailey) that I have no authority over Dr. Moore; that is vested in his board of trustees."

Affirmation of Moore

Ken Barbic, a member of Capitol Hill Baptist Church in Washington, and chairman of the ERLC's board of trustees, affirmed Moore.

"He speaks with prophetic clarity to the pressing cultural and ethical issues of our time, with which every Christian must wrestle," Barbic said, adding, "I am particularly grateful for his courageous and convictional leadership, under which I've observed within our convention and beyond, significant newfound energy and excitement about the work of the ERLC the last several years."

Two prominent Southern Baptist African-American leaders - Byron Day, president of the National African American Fellowship of the SBC, and Dwight McKissic, pastor of Cornerstone Baptist

Church in Arlington, Texas - have publicly shared their support for Moore and his role in forwarding racial reconciliation within the denomination.

"Russell Moore has done nothing worthy of discipline or firing. He has not violated The Baptist Faith and Message and, in fact, has been outstanding as president of the ERLC," said Day in an open letter to

Southern Baptists published by Baptist Press.

"He has represented all Southern Baptists, contending for the highly visible ethical issues of abortion and biblical marriage; but he has also addressed social injustices such as racism which have been long overlooked," Day added.

In a post on *sbcvoices.com*, McKissic said, "Dr. Russell Moore has brought a prophetic word to 'his own' and 'his own' receives him not. I predict in the next generation, Dr. Russell Moore will be celebrated as the Southern Baptist who had the greatest impact on race relations in her history and policies and positions that are objectionable to some Southern Baptists today, will be representative of the vast majority of Southern Baptists of all races in the next generation."

Differing opinions in SBC

Speaking to *The (Nashville) Tennessean* Barry Hankins, professor of history at Baylor University, said the recent controversy with Moore is based on

differing opinions within the Southern Baptist Convention on how Baptists should engage politically.

Hankins boils the two camps down to one that is theologically conservative, closely aligns itself with the Republican Party and holds strongest to the importance of two issues: ending abortion and upholding biblical marriage. He said the other camp is also theologically conservative but is not afraid to break with the Republican Party and sees a wider range of issues as important.

"If he can't speak biblically on issues when his position doesn't line up with the Republican Party, what does that say about the status of the Southern Baptist Convention?" Hankins told *The Tennessean*.

"It just doesn't speak very well for an organization that's supposed to be theologically and biblically grounded - as opposed to being involved in partisan politics with one party or another," he said.

In comments to *The Post*, Nathan Finn, dean of Union University's School of Theology and Missions said, "The last time Southern Baptists were this divided, the Republican Party was reinventing itself."

"If you're one step in front of Southern Baptists, you're a leader. If you're two steps in front, you're a prophet. Three steps in front of Southern Baptists? You're a target. A lot of Southern Baptists think Russell Moore is three or four steps in front of Southern Baptists," said Finn.

Contact Caleb Yarbrough at caleb@arkansasbaptist.org.

Wilkie discusses Camp Siloam's future in podcast

SILOAM SPRINGS – For the past 93 years, an “incredible number of people” (300 to 400) professions of faith annually “have been brought into the kingdom of God” through the ministry of Camp Siloam, said Jason Wilkie, Camp Siloam’s executive director since 2010 – and God is not finished with the camp yet.

Looking forward to the eight weeks of the 2017 summer camping season, Wilkie, speaking to host Bill Bumpas in the Arkansas Baptist News (ABN) Podcast 62, added, “We feel like God has brought our team here to set a foundation for the next 100 years of ministry. We feel that God still wants to use this incredible place.”

Camp registration opened on Nov. 1, and he said that there are still several weeks that have space for additional campers. Two or three of the weeks will have 800-900 campers each week, while the other weeks will welcome 400-500 campers each week.

Wilkie said that he is expecting 5,000 campers this summer, and he is praying that many of those campers will be lost so that they might hear and respond to the gospel.

“We would love to see more lost kids come to camp. On average about 10 percent of campers make professions of faith. We’ve been praying, ‘God, will You let us see 15 percent of campers saved?’” he said.

Camp leaders focus on three core philosophies with all youth campers, he said.

First, he said camp leaders teach campers about their identity in Christ. “Once you know Jesus, He’s in you. You are a child of the King. He defines who you are,” said Wilkie. Next, camp leaders teach young campers about God’s plan for their lives. Third, camp leaders help campers understand God’s mission for the world.

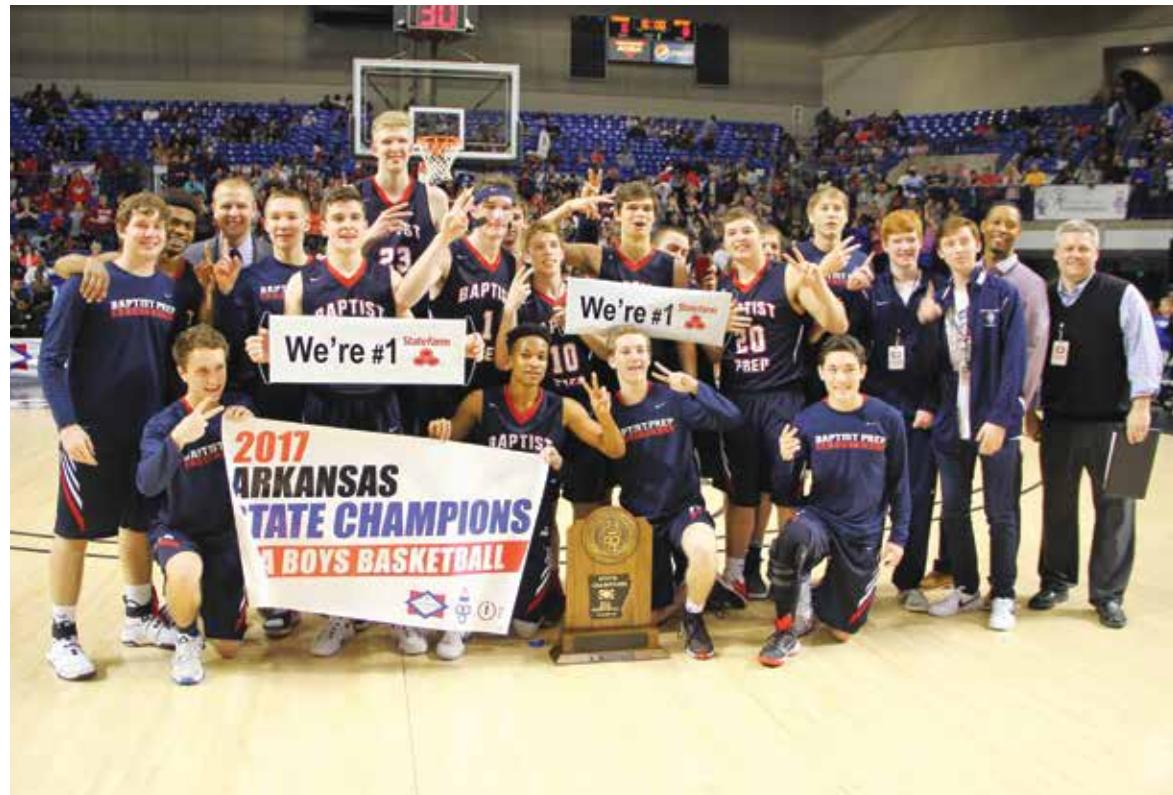
“Missions is a big part of what we teach,” said Wilkie, adding that Camp Siloam is one of only two Southern Baptist camps in our country that bring in an International Mission Board Journeyman to develop relationships and teach campers about missions for the duration of the summer camp experience.

If a young camper can understand those three [core philosophies], they can make an eternal, global impact,” said Wilkie.

The camp executive director expressed appreciation for the many people involved in various leadership roles with Camp Siloam. He said that the meaning of the word “Siloam,” a Hebrew word from John 9:7, is “sent.” Rather than assembling a staff, Wilkie said that he prays for God to “send college students to work for the summer, full-time staff, donors, volunteers” and others.

“He (God) has sent some incredible people,” said Wilkie.

“We so appreciate what Arkansas Baptists have done,” he said, adding that the Cooperative Program sustained Camp Siloam through some lean



BAPTIST PREP WINS 2ND STRAIGHT TITLE – Little Rock’s Baptist Prep Eagles won a second straight state basketball championship March 10 over the Pea Ridge Blackhawks. It is the Eagles’ fifth state title in the 4A State Championship game. Friday night’s 59-51 victory closed out Baptist Prep’s 31-4 season. Connor Vanover, the Eagles’ 7’3” junior center, scored 20 points and pulled down 11 rebounds in the win. Isaac McBride, a sophomore, finished with 20 points and received the tournament’s MVP honor. The Baptist Preparatory School is a ministry of First Baptist Church, Little Rock.

years when other Christian camps had to close.

In the podcast, Wilkie also discussed the Feed My Sheep campaign, launched in 2015 to raise funds for a new dining hall.

Campers, he said, are “coming to the Master’s table both spiritually and physically. In order to keep feeding kids spiritually, we need to feed them physically and practically with a new dining hall.”

In just 14 months, \$2 million has been raised in the Feed My Sheep campaign, and the camp is looking at possibly breaking ground this spring and using the new dining hall in the summer of 2018, he said.

Wilkie said the last fund-raising campaign for Camp Siloam was in 1991 when \$1 million was raised for a new worship center, adding, “I am not a trained fundraiser. What inspires people to give to the kingdom is telling stories about how God is using this incredible place and has used it for 93 years.”

FELLOWSHIP OF RETIRED BAPTIST WORKERS

TUESDAY, APRIL 18, 2017, 9:00 A.M.–1:00 P.M.
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\$12 PER PERSON (INCLUDES LUNCH AND MORNING REFRESHMENTS)
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CMCCALL@ABSC.ORG OR
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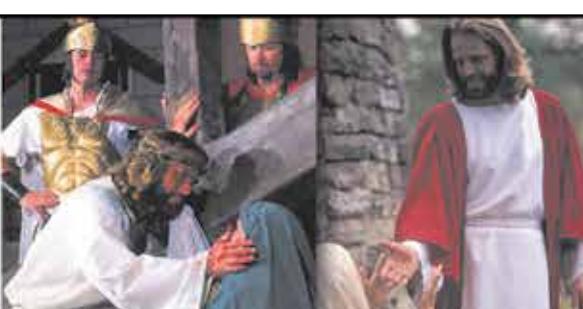
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Tax matters: Who is a Minister for Tax Purposes?

DALLAS – GuideStone Financial Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention provides tax advice for ministers. Below are some commonly asked questions listed on the website, guidestoneretirement.org.

Are licensed or commissioned ministers always Ministers for Tax Purposes? Some licensed or commissioned ministers may be considered Ministers for Tax Purposes. But they are less likely to be considered Ministers for Tax Purposes than ordained ministers. Each individual's circumstances are important.

Are ordained ministers always Ministers for Tax Purposes? Ordained ministers are

more likely than licensed or commissioned ministers to be considered Ministers for Tax Purposes. But the IRS also considers other criteria.

Are there any general rules about who will pass these tests? As a practical matter, most ordained ministers serving a church will answer Yes to all the questions. Many licensed and commissioned ministers cannot meet all the criteria, but some can. Taxpayers must make their own decisions about whether they are Ministers for Tax Purposes. If they need help, they should consult a competent tax adviser with experience in ministerial tax issues.

How does the IRS decide whether a taxpayer is a Minister for Tax Purposes? The IRS considers individual facts and circumstances to decide if a taxpayer is a Minister for Tax Purposes. Court cases and practices of different denominations have influenced IRS decisions.

These questions will help determine if a person is a Minister for Tax Purposes:

- Is the person ordained, licensed or commissioned?
- Does the person administer ordinances (baptism and the Lord's Supper)?
- Does the person conduct religious worship?
- Does the person have management responsibilities in the church?
- Is the person considered to be a religious leader by the church?

Generally, a Minister for Tax Purposes must be ordained, licensed or commissioned and answer Yes to a majority of the other four questions.

If an employee's title includes "minister," is that person a Minister for Tax Purposes? A church may call someone a "minister," but the IRS may not treat that person as a Minister for Tax Purposes; that depends on individual facts and circumstances.

Should a church ordain, commission or license someone so the church can designate a

housing allowance for that person? A church should never ordain, commission or license anyone in an effort to make that person eligible for a minister's housing allowance. Churches should ordain, license or commission clergy for theological reasons, not tax reasons. Remember that the IRS doesn't automatically consider someone a Minister for Tax Purposes simply because that person is ordained, commissioned or licensed.

Why is it important for ministers and churches to know whether a taxpayer is a Minister for Tax Purposes? Special



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rules apply to Ministers for Tax Purposes. Ministers and churches should understand those rules, so they can comply with federal tax laws. Ministers for Tax Purposes:

- Are eligible for a church-designated housing allowance.
- Are always self-employed for Social Security purposes for their ministerial income.
- Are exempt from federal income tax withholding.
- Use the quarterly estimated tax procedure to pay their taxes, unless they elect voluntary withholding.
- May be eligible to opt out of Social Security, although very few ministers qualify to do this.

For more articles on taxes, retirement and insurance, visit guidestone.org.

Enrollment opens for new master's degree at Williams

WALNUT RIDGE – Enrollment has begun for the first master's degree program at Williams Baptist College (WBC). Williams received approval from its accrediting agency in January to begin offering a master of arts in teaching (MAT) degree, which will be completely online.

Classes are set to start in May, according to Brad Baine, WBC academic dean.

Baine said the college will offer a "loyalty incentive" to individuals who received their undergraduate degrees from Williams, providing a 10 percent discount on the tuition cost of all MAT courses.

The Williams teacher education program offers bachelor's degrees in eight different majors. Those interested in the program may contact Weaver at rweaver@wbcoll.edu.

Baptist life

Red River Baptist Association (RRBA) in Arkadelphia recently saw 338 people come to Christ during a February mission trip to Honduras, according to Joe Burt, RRBA's associational missionary.

Estelle Langston, a member of First Baptist Church, Glenwood, recently celebrated her 100th birthday. One hundred red balloons were released March 2 during an event in which Langston celebrated her centennial birthday with friends, family and fellow residents of the Oak Park Village assisted living facility in Glenwood.

Church life

Darby Lane Baptist Church in Russellville is seeking an Arkansas church group to volunteer to make repairs on its church parsonage as a spring or summer project. Pastor Joe Yates said Darby Lane Baptist will provide lumber and other materials for the work, in addition to furnishing meals. For more information email roxie@centurytel.

net or call 479-970-8558.

Calvary Baptist Church, Little Rock, will hold an 80th anniversary celebration April 2. A fellowship luncheon will follow worship.

Dollarway Baptist Church in Pine Bluff will hold revival services March 31-April 2. Services will be held at 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. on Sunday. Weekday services begin at 6 p.m. Evangelist Mike Reeves of Mississippi will serve as the revival's speaker.

First Baptist Church, Corning, will celebrate its 130th birthday on April 30. An outdoor service is planned for 10:45 a.m. at Wynn Park in Corning, followed by a block party and gathering. The community is invited to attend. For more information, call the church office at 870-857-3790.

On the move

Jeff Crawford is the new senior pastor of Grace Baptist Church in Knoxville, Tenn. Crawford previously served as president of the Cross Church School of Ministry and teaching pastor at Cross Church,



Members of Calvary Baptist Church, Little Rock's handbell choir participate in the 43rd Annual Arkansas State Handbell Festival March 11 at Geyer Springs First Baptist Church, Little Rock. Photo by Caleb Yarbrough

located in northwest Arkansas.

Brett Cottrell is serving as pastor of First Baptist Church, London. Cottrell most recently served as pastor of Crabbapple First Baptist Church in Milton, Ga.

Jimmy Burks is serving as associate pastor of First Baptist Church in Cullendale. Burks retired after serving churches in Arkansas and Texas. Burks

is returning to First Baptist for the second time, having served on the church's staff in the 1970s and 1980s.

Robby Tingle, member of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention's (ABSC) executive and administrative team, is retiring from the ABSC. Tingle recently accepted a call as pastor to First Southern Baptist Church in Bryant.



■ **Houseparents needed: Baptist Home for Children, Monticello.**

These full-time positions include salary, housing, medical and life insurance and paid leave. Contact: Randy Luper at 870.367.5358 or rluper@abchomes.org.

■ **Case manager needed: Baptist Home for Children, Monticello.**

A bachelor's degree in a human services field or two years human services experience and a non-related bachelor's degree is required. This full-time position includes salary, medical insurance, life insurance and paid leave. Contact Randy Luper at 870.367.5358 or rluper@abchomes.org.

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Classifieds

PASTOR

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

Second Baptist Church, Russellville, AR, is prayerfully seeking a **senior pastor**. Accepting resumes through April 30, 2017. Email resume to: pastorsearch@sbc.org.

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.

Trinity Baptist Church of Idabel, OK, is prayerfully seeking a **full-time senior pastor**. Please send resumes to andrewr@tbcidabel.com or 2805 E. Washington, Idabel, OK 74745.

Falling Springs Community Church (est. 1898), a rural, non-denominational, traditional worship church in northwest Arkansas, is accepting applications for a **bi-vocational pastor** who has a passion for church growth. Please email resumé with references: fscc1898@yahoo.com or mail: Pastoral Search Committee Falling Springs Community Church P.O. Box 325 Decatur, AR 72722.

Senior pastor: Fairfield Glade First Baptist Church, Crossville, TN, is seeking a **full-time senior pastor** who is God-led to be our shepherd. He must preach and teach sound biblical doctrine; have a heart for evangelism, missions and membership care; and be supportive of

doctrines within the Baptist Faith and Message 2000. He must possess the ability to communicate & counsel different age groups and lead multiple staff. Must have a minimum of ten years senior pastoral experience; provide pastoral leadership, vision and pastoral care. MDiv degree desired. Salary TBD. Job description posted on website: www.onhisrock.org. Send resumes to pastorsearchfgbc@gmail.com or: Fairfield Glade First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 1729, 130 Towne Centre Way, Fairfield Glade, TN 38571.

Woodland Baptist Church, a small rural

Southern Baptist church, in Clarksville, Arkansas, seeks a **full-time pastor**. Accepting

resumes through April 30, 2017. Send resume and references to Pastor Search Committee,

Woodland Baptist Church, P.O. Box 1009, Clarksville, AR 72830.

Kingsland First Baptist Church is seeking a **bi-vocational pastor**; parsonage available. Please send resumes to Kingsland First Baptist Church, PO Box 97, Kingsland, AR 71652.

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

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

Cocklebur Baptist Church, Ward, AR is prayerfully seeking a **bi-vocational pastor**. Parsonage is available. Accepting resumes

through April 30, 2017. Email resume to PasterresumeCBC@gmail.com or mail to 4138 Cocklebur Rd, Ward, AR 72176.

OTHER STAFF POSITIONS

South Main Baptist Church, in Crossett, AR is prayerfully seeking a **part-time youth minister**. You may send a resume to smbcsec-secretary@windstream.net, or mail to South Main Baptist Church, PO Box 430, Crossett, AR 71635.

Full-time youth and family pastor needed - Fellowship Bible Church, Russellville.

Bible college or seminary degree preferred.

Previous youth experience required. Email: fellowshiprussellville@gmail.com.

Immanuel Baptist, El Dorado, seeks a **full-time children's director**. If interested, contact 870-862-4264 or sricker@ibcedorado.com.

Beech River Baptist Association is seeking an **associational missionary** who will assist 42 churches, located in 3 West Tennessee counties, to partner together in order to impact the world for Christ. E-mail resumes to richard.reb@gmail.com or send them to: Associational Missionary Search Committee, P.O. Box 498, Lexington, TN 38351. Resumes will be received until April 30, 2017.

Part-time youth/student minister needed at Beech Street Baptist Church, Gurdon. Please send resume to PO Box 408,

Gurdon AR 71743.

Full-time youth/student pastor FBC Pea Ridge, Arkansas. Also, provides support to discipleship ministries in coordination with the Sr. Pastor. Email resume to al@prfc.org.

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

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

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

FBC Dardanelle is seeking a **worship leader, part-time or full-time** with other duties. Send resume to 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.

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

at 870-413-1938.

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

Small church needs **music director**. Sundays only. Contact 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.

MISCELLANEOUS

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For Sale: **2003 Chevrolet Venture LS 8-passenger van**. 93K miles. Well-maintained. Kept under roof. 2 new tires. Asking \$4,000. First Baptist Church, PO Box 5, Whiteville, TN 38075. Contact fbcwhitevilletn@gmail.com.

Looking for **2 pews**. Older the better. Contact: 479-790-2471.

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APRIL 2, 2017

Around the world, believers face rejection by their families when they choose to trust in Jesus. Many face death! Are you willing to be rejected because of your relationship with Jesus – even to the point of death? Most importantly, do you fully grasp the eternal death that waits for those who reject Jesus?

In this parable we have the land-owner representing God; the vineyard representing Israel, Jerusalem and the kingdom; the farmers representing the Jewish leaders; the slaves representing the prophets; and the son representing Jesus. It was Tuesday after the triumphal entry when Jesus shared this parable – before the crucifixion. What are some of the things His disciples had seen? Jesus had cleansed the temple and reminded the people it should be a house of prayer instead of a den of robbers. He healed, and He had children confirm His identity as Messiah through their praise. They saw a fig tree wither at Jesus' command – one that looked good but had no fruit. And they saw Jesus respond to dishonest and

ignorant leaders. Jesus used the parables to reinforce Who He was, what genuine faith and fruitfulness look like, and the obedience that it requires. If the Jewish leaders had understood and truly followed Jesus, they would have

appealed to the people to accept His invitation to the kingdom of heaven. Instead, they were more concerned with appearances, profit and power.

Though rejected, Jesus became the central figure for redemption. The kingdom was taken from the Jewish leaders and given to Jesus' disciples, confirming Daniel's prophecy that Jesus' kingdom would reign over and destroy all others, including all those who reject Him!

It's Easter! Will you be the leader or the slave?

Will you be more concerned with appearances or appeals, profit or the gain of heaven, power that dies or power that ends in the resurrection from the grave? Will you reject Him or risk being rejected for Him? The destruction of those who reject hangs in the balance.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

If I reject Jesus?

MATTHEW 21:33-45



Susie Thompson
Greenwood

We live in a day when relationships can feel incredibly fragile. Last year studies by CNN showed millennial college graduates change full-time jobs four times in their first decade out of school; this is double the changes the previous generation made.

The nuclear family unit – which, according to Scripture, begins with a marriage commitment between a man and a woman for a lifetime – is now frequently seen as a convenient co-habitation arrangement. Cohabitation increased by 138 percent from 1990 to 2010 according to the U.S. Census. Juxtaposed to this culture of temporary, disposable relationships is the promise of our Savior and Lord in Romans 8.

Paul asked the questions many in today's world are asking, "Who can separate us from the love of Christ?" (Rom. 8:35a, HCSB). What will cause Jesus to write me off? Is God's love for me conditional? Does a change in my circumstance mean a change in my relationship with God?

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

Victory over fear

ROMANS 8:31-39



Jeff Thompson
Greenwood

The answer to these questions is, "No, in all these things we are more than victorious through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that not even death or life, angels or rulers, things present or things to come, hostile powers, height or depth, or any other created thing will have the power to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord!" (Rom. 8:37-39, HCSB).

When in faith we turn from sin and self-rule, when by faith we place our hope for forgiveness in Christ's sacrifice on the cross and victory over sin and death in the resurrection, when by faith we surrender control of our lives into the hands Jesus Christ our Lord, our relationship with Him is secure for all eternity.

Paul said it this way to Timothy, "But I am not ashamed, because I know the One I have believed in and am persuaded that He is able to guard what has been entrusted to me until that day" (2 Tim. 1:12, HCSB).

APRIL 9, 2017

This week Bro. Bennie (a 92-year-old deacon at First Baptist Church, Ratcliff) shared an amazing story with my husband. Bro. Bennie recently received a phone call from a man who was looking for the American soldier who had shared Jesus with him in a WWII German foxhole.

Bennie was the soldier.

During a lull in the fighting, Bennie's sergeant asked him if he would be willing to crawl over to the enemy foxhole and share the gospel because he knew one of the German soldiers from childhood. Bennie admitted he was more than a little scared, but he agreed he would if the enemies were willing to hear him.

They were, and a young 18-year-old believer crawled over and shared his testimony of conversion and a bit of Scripture and prayed for the salvation of those enemies; then he crawled back to his side of the lines. This was the first time Bennie had ever shared his faith

with an unbeliever.

The former German soldier, now a 94-year-old widower living with his daughter in Madrid, wanted to share the rest of the story. He and one of the other four soldiers had placed their faith in Christ.

After the war, this man returned home to Germany, and the Lord called him into the pastorate. He wondered if he might have a picture of the man who had been faithful to share the good news of Christ's invitation to all men – even mortal enemies in the midst of war.

Our passage makes two things abundantly clear: 1) Our job, as believers, is to deliver our

Savior's invitation to everyone, and 2) The Father is the One who will judge if someone's faith is genuine and bears the fruit of repentance.

Bro. Bennie was faithful to do his part and was blessed to learn the rest of the story this side of eternity. Will you be faithful this week?

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Offered to all?

MATTHEW 22:1-14



Susie Thompson
Greenwood

Fred was his name, a man in 1950s Oklahoma City. He was a good person, but he was lost. His wife had been asking him to come to church with her so long it was a sore point between them. When the church prepared

for the spring revival, Fred made a deal with his wife: he would attend every service with her, but when the week was over she would never pester him about going to church again.

Each night he attended, his wife and the entire church prayed. Fred showed all the signs of conviction, but each night the invitation ended with him holding the pew in front of him with a death grip. Sunday through Sunday, ten services in all,

Fred heard the gospel and yet refused to surrender control of his life to Jesus.

His testimony is he tossed and turned all night after the revival ended. At the second stoplight on the way to his first appointment as a TV repairman Monday morning, he finally cried

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

Victory shared

LUKE 24:44-49



Jeff Thompson
Greenwood

out to the Lord this simple prayer, "By golly, I'll do it!" He spoke five simple words expressing the plea of his heart to repent of his sin, to ask forgiveness by Christ's sacrificial death, burial, and resurrection and to surrender control of his life to Jesus Christ as Lord of all.

How do we know that's what Fred meant? When he arrived at his appointment, a startled housewife heard her TV repairman say, "Ma'am, I'll fix your set in just a moment. But I've got to tell you that I just gave my life to Jesus Christ and He saved me – a sinner."

The next Sunday morning, Fred shared that same testimony with the entire church.

He was baptized as a symbol of his faith, and he spent the rest of his life sharing with anyone who would listen what Christ had done for him and his family.

When Christ gives the victory, you can't help but cheer!

'Cajuns' take gumbo, gospel to French Canadians

DIEPPE, New Brunswick, Canada (BP) - Louis Charrier was putting the finishing touches on his southern Louisiana gumbo and already a line of 15 people was forming, eager to get a taste of the Cajun dish at a block party in Dieppe, New Brunswick.

Moments later, some fellow Louisiana Baptists begin serving the cuisine by the bowl, along with an evangelism tract telling the purpose of their trip to the Canadian province.

One of three 2016 trips Louisiana Baptists took to New Brunswick and neighboring Nova Scotia, the Cajun Connection is a joint effort by churches around the state.

While there, they minister with a Canadian church for door-to-door surveys, Vacation Bible School and student ministry.

The outreach, which aims to connect the culture of Louisiana with its northern roots, began in 2004 with Louisiana missionaries Winter and Betty Case from Stonewall who spent two years in Halifax, Nova Scotia, and opened a door of opportunity to share Christ.

Historical ties

Cajuns are descendants of the French Canadians who came to Louisiana more than 260 years ago, moving from Nova Scotia starting in 1755 when Great Britain acquired control of the area. When the Acadians did not become cooperative British subjects, the British began removing them from the Canadian province. Known as the Great Derange-

ment, the Acadians settled in various countries, including the United States, and by the 19th century nearly 4,000 Acadians had moved to southern Louisiana.

"For us, when we go to a Cajun area and say we are from Louisiana, it immediately opens the door," said Charrier, pastor of Washington Baptist Church and three other church plants in Louisiana. "Their eyes light up and it gives an open door always. They consider you a part of their past - and that common French background is the entry point for Louisiana Baptists."

"It's more than just a Cajun Connection. We are trying to connect people to God who have been disconnected," Charrier said. "The real connection is not horizontal but vertical. We use that name for a cultural connection. But once we arrive for that cultural connection it opens the door."

Spiritual bonds

Steven Kelley, pastor at Bayou Vista Baptist Church in Morgan City who participated for a third consecutive year, said returning on a regular basis builds bridges to sharing the gospel with the people of the Canadian province.

He mentioned the example of a young girl who has attended vacation Bible school (VBS) all three years, beginning in 2014.

The first year, the team made the girl and her mother some cupcakes. By the third year, the mother, who was unchurched, attended a worship



Mark Spradling assists children with crafts at a Vacation Bible School during a "Cajun Connection" mission trip to New Brunswick, Canada, sponsored by the Louisiana Baptist Convention. Spradling is a member of Bayou Vista Baptist Church in Morgan City.

service at a local church.

Kelley also shared about two young boys who attended the VBS this year. By the end of the week, he said, their mother was communicating with the team through Facebook, sharing the impact they had on her sons.

While neither mother has yet accepted Christ, Kelley said the effort planted seeds that he hopes one day will lead to their having a relationship with Jesus.

"For me, it's all about relationship building," said Kelley, who also serves as director of missions for Gulf Coast Baptist Association. "The first year you go, everything is new. But now we have a personal and re-

lational investment that makes it all different.

"I have gotten to know the community and built those connections," he said. "You only get that by going to the same place over time."

Kelley said the camaraderie among the Christians in the area is something he hopes to model more in south Louisiana.

"The churches up there, because there are so few of them, have a tremendous fellowship," Kelley said.

LBC partnerships

The Cajun Connection is among Louisiana Baptists' partnerships that span at least 50 countries. Wayne Shep-

pard, executive assistant to the executive director for Louisiana Baptists, said the Canadian partnership is a perfect opportunity to share Christ's love in another country, particularly for those living in southern Louisiana.

"The main reason is the affinity of French Acadians - natural connectivity culturally and historically," Sheppard said. "Additionally, the people group network has an excellent strategy and leadership team. Finally, it is very good entry-level mission experience for people who have never done missions."

For information on the Cajun Connection, contact Charrier at 337-308-0336.

Princeton Seminary reverses decision to honor Keller

PRINCETON, N.J. (BP) - Princeton Theological Seminary's reversal of its decision to give an award to New York pastor Tim Keller has drawn criticism as shameful and contrary to the seminary's theological heritage.

Princeton Seminary, the flagship institution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), had announced Keller as the recipient of its Abraham Kuyper Prize for Excellence in Reformed Theology and Public Witness, a \$10,000 award.

But in a March 22 letter to the seminary community, President Craig Barnes said the decision had been reversed in order to "not imply any endorsement" of Keller's "belief that women and [lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender] persons should not be ordained."

Houston Baptist University President Robert Sloan, a 1973 master of divinity graduate from Princeton Seminary, said the decision not to give Keller the Kuyper Prize is "a terrible shame."

"It seems to be an indication of ... pretty narrow and dogmatic thinking first to offer and then under pressure to retract the offer of an award to a theologian and pastor ... as distinguished as Tim Keller," Sloan said. "They knew Tim Keller's views before they made the offer of the award."

Keller, a bestselling author and pastor of New York City's Redeemer Presbyterian Church, will still lecture at Princeton Seminary April 6 as

planned, Barnes said.

In a previous letter to the seminary community, Barnes noted protests of Keller's scheduled visit and said Princeton Seminary "stand[s] in prophetic opposition" to Keller's denomination, the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA), and to "many other Christian denominations that do not extend the full exercise of the Spirit filled gifts for women or those of various sexual orientations."

While the PCA's "Book of

Church Order" - which all the denomination's pastors must uphold - limits the office of pastor to men and defines marriage as "between one man and one woman," Religion News Service noted Keller "is not known for pushing hot-button culture war issues."

According to the seminary's reasoning, Sloan said, Kuyper himself apparently would be ineligible for the prize bearing his name because he believed in male leadership within churches and homes.

No Fake News

Rather, *The Good News*

ABNEWS Telling the story of Arkansas Baptists since 1901 Volume 116, Number 4

Inside:

- Prestonwood Baptist escrows CP funds
- Gaines shares views on prayer, SBC
- Arkansas Baptist DR vols deploy to La.
- Letter claims ban deeply concerning
- Baptist florist to appeal case to SCOTUS

Platt apologetic to Baptists IMB president says mosque brief 'deceptive'

Tremis Henderson Ouachita Baptist University

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

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

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

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

See EDUCATION page 11

Thompson AM of the year Concord association leader noted for 'effective ministry'

March 9, 2017

ABNEWS Telling the story of Arkansas Baptists since 1901 Volume 116, Number 5

Inside:

- Escrowing of CP draws attention of SBC
- Ark. court strikes down LGBT ordinance
- Williams escapes major storm damage
- IMB eliminates 22 tech positions
- 600-plus students learn to defend faith

Thompson AM of the year Concord association leader noted for 'effective ministry'

March 9, 2017

Sharing the gospel, one sign at a time

Margaret Colson Arkansas Baptist News

NORTH LITTLE ROCK — When was the last time you stood on a busy street corner — or maybe at a major sporting event — holding a banner or placard with a Scripture reference or gospel message?

If your answer is, "Well, it's been awhile," or maybe even, "Well ... never," then Reg Hammann, a member of Park Hill Baptist Church in North Little Rock, thinks you might be missing out on a unique

See GOSPEL page 7



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