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Arkansas 'suffered with us'

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Williams gift of \$2.9 million 'unprecedented'

WALNUT RIDGE - Williams Baptist College (WBC) recently received an unprecedented \$2.9 million gift - the largest ever received by the college - from the estate of Jonesboro businessman Clifford Toney.

Toney, who died in 2015, was an alumnus of WBC and bequeathed the bulk of



Toney

his estate to the liberal arts college in Walnut Ridge. The college was notified of a "multi-million gift" from the estate in December 2015,

but the actual amount of the gift was not known until now, said Brett Cooper, vice president for institutional advancement.

"Cliff Toney was a great friend to Williams Baptist College, and his generosity will continue to be an incredible blessing to Williams and its students well beyond his life. We are humbled and extremely grateful," said Tom Jones, WBC president.

Toney, a 1980 graduate of Williams, was involved in a wide range of business endeavors around Jonesboro, including a prominent auction service that he operated for a number of years. He died in August 2015 at the age of 57 following a lengthy illness.

Most of the estate involved personal property and real estate that had been sold at auction in recent months. It in-

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From 'Big Bosnia' to 'Little Bosnia'

Lisa Falknor
Special to the ABN

ST. LOUIS - For two years from 2008 until 2010, Jason and Rachele Helmbacher served in Sarajevo, Bosnia, as International Mission Board (IMB) missionaries. Then after a pediatrician diagnosed their son with Asperger's syndrome - a condition the doctor said would worsen if the family continued to reside overseas - they resigned.

"We were devastated," said Helmbacher. "We thought we were going to retire there."

But, their work in Bosnia wasn't over. From 2010 to 2015 as pastor of Jenny Lind First Baptist Church in Greenwood, Helmbacher led 15 percent of that congregation to take mission trips to Sarajevo. Every summer Helmbacher served there, he inspired others to do the same - like a couple who retired early to live in Bosnia as missionaries. The couple still calls Bosnia home today.

"Our ministry increased,"



Pastor Jason Helmbacher (right), baptizes on Father's Day 2016 at the Church of Affton in St. Louis. Helmbacher said the church has baptized six people since its official launch on March 27, 2016.

Helmbacher said. "Very quickly we were more involved in Bosnian ministry than when we were in Bosnia."

Though Helmbacher, his wife and two children now serve another church, Jenny Lind First Baptist still partners with them as they minister in a new kind of Bosnia.

Helmbacher is now pastor in Affton, St. Louis, located five miles from Bevo Mill, a place known as "Little Bos-

nia." Last year, a dying First Baptist Church congregation in Affton asked the Missouri native to take over their church building, a six-floor structure in desperate need of remodeling.

"This church is in the middle of the largest population of Bosnians outside of Bosnia - 70,000," Helmbacher said. Bosnian war refugees immigrated to St. Louis about 20 years ago, creating

Little Bosnia.

"We as a family have this burden to see these people reached," said Helmbacher.

The Helmbachers remodeled the building, renamed it the Church at Affton, and launched the church March 27, 2016. On the first day 220 people attended. Helmbacher said the church baptized six people last year

See **BOSNIA** page 8

Churches look to future after paying off debt

Margaret Colson
Arkansas Baptist News

TWO ARKANSAS BAPTIST churches recently retired millions of dollars of debt and, with the new year, are looking forward expectantly to God's plans for their futures.

In the *Arkansas Baptist News* (ABN) Podcast 57, host Bill Bumpas talks with Mark Carter,

er, associate pastor for business administration and discipleship for Immanuel Baptist Church, Little Rock, and Ken Shaddox, senior pastor of Park Hill Baptist Church, North Little Rock.

On Dec. 4, Immanuel Baptist Church celebrated the retirement of a \$40 million debt, which took about 14 years to pay off.

"It's been a remarkable feat. We give the Lord all the glory and credit. Our people's faithfulness has been phenomenal," said Carter.

When the church first began considering and praying about making a move from downtown Little Rock to its current location - and the price tag associated with making such a move - all of

the church's primary financial consultants "universally" told the church, "You can't do it. There's no way with the size congregation you've got to do this kind of financial project," said Carter.

Still, "It was clear to key leaders that this was what God was wanting us to do," he said,

See **DEBT** page 11

POSTAGE INFORMATION

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ABN Digest

Stories of interest
to Arkansas Baptists

Congress more Catholic, less Protestant since '61

WASHINGTON – Like the nation as a whole, Congress has become much less Protestant over time. The total percentage of Protestants in Congress has dropped from 75 percent in 1961 (at the beginning of the 87th Congress) to 56 percent today, Pew Research reported. During this period, the share of Catholics in Congress has gone from 19 percent to 31 percent. Fully two-thirds of Republicans in the new Congress (67 percent) are Protestant, while 27 percent are Catholic.

Trump transition team listening to evangelicals

A FORMER Southern Baptist Convention official who sits on U.S. President Donald Trump's evangelical advisory board is surprised by the amount of input the group is having in helping to shape the new administration, Baptist News Global reported.

"I've been solicited five times now for personnel recommendations, for resumes," Richard Land, president of Southern Evangelical Seminary and former president of the Southern Baptist Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, said Jan. 10 in a radio broadcast. "That didn't happen in the Bush administration."

Land said previous administrations might listen to input from evangelical leaders, but the Trump transition team actively sought their advice in ways he has never seen.

"This administration is going to have more conservative Christians – Catholic and evangelical – in it than any administration that I have been associated with or had contact with, and I've been doing this since Reagan."

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

AUL: Arkansas 4th most pro-life state

ARKANSAS is the fourth most "protective" pro-life state, according to an annual report released by Americans United for Life (AUL).

The report by the organization lists the most pro-life and pro-abortion states, according to each state's record of passing pro-life legislation that protects women and unborn children.

For the second consecutive year, Oklahoma earned the top pro-life ranking, followed by Kansas, Louisiana, Arkansas and Arizona.

For the eighth consecutive year, Washington remained the state where women have the fewest pro-life legal protections, followed by California, Vermont, New Jersey and Oregon.

Most "protective" states rounding out the Top 10 were South Dakota, Mississippi, Georgia, Michigan and Pennsylvania.

Least "protective" states rounding out the Top 10 were Nevada, New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts and Hawaii.

Denise Burke, AUL vice president of legal affairs who oversees the legal and legislative analysis, said that legislators are using "increasingly creative and effective ways to protect women from abortion industry abuses."

Overall, 43 states considered more than 360 abortion-related measures in 2016, according to AUL. A majority of states considered measures related to federal and state funding of abortion and abortion providers. Other abortion-related measures in 2016 included late-term abortion limitations; prohibitions on



Thousands gather to pray and voice their opposition to abortion during the Arkansas Right to Life March for Life Jan. 17, 2016, at the Arkansas Capitol. Photo by Caleb Yarbrough

abortions based on sex, race, or genetic abnormalities; ultrasound requirements and financial for abortion alternatives.

Four states earned AUL's 2017 All-Star Status for their implementation of the goals of and component legislation in AUL's innovative Women's Protection Project and Infants' Protection Project: Arizona, Arkansas, Mississippi and Oklahoma. Burke noted that new tools from AUL mean that even more laws may be passed in 2017.

"When the Supreme Court rejected Texas' abortion safety standards, abortion advocates celebrated, but they ignored the fine print," said Burke. "In fact, the Court found that such laws could survive a legal challenge if well-supported by

medical evidence."

Burke added, "New this year is a unique AUL report, 'Unsafe,' documenting horrific conditions in abortion clinics across the country. He said the report is designed to help equip legislators as they argue for better and more comprehensive pro-life protections. In addition AUL's model legislation has been updated to respond to the Supreme Court's decision and the evolving legal and medical landscape surrounding abortion.

The investigative report documents that at least 227 abortion providers in at least 32 states were cited for more than 1,400 health and safety deficiencies between 2008 and 2016, AUL reported. "Unsafe" also reported more than 750

significant violations of state laws regulating abortion.

"It should be clear to all that the abortion industry operates as the red-light district of American medicine, fighting the kinds of common-sense regulations that protect women in reputable medical settings," said Burke.

"Legislators who care about the dangers of abortion for women and their unborn children and who are horrified by substandard conditions in abortion clinics will be empowered in 2017 with new and updated model legislation, new analysis in 'Unsafe,' and new tools for exposing substandard abortion care and remedying it through better inspections and more comprehensive health and safety mandates."

WILLIAMS

continued from page one

cluded several prominent parcels of real estate in Jonesboro. Toney was also an avid collector, and he left a wide array of cars, musical instruments, jewelry, coins and antiques.

Jones said the Toney estate will help fund capital improvements at the college, including a new residence hall that will be completed this year, and he said the gift is a major help as WBC moves forward on

several other fronts.

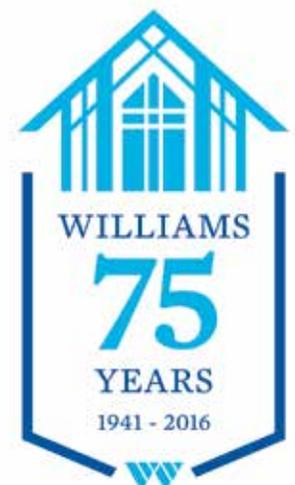
"Williams is expanding its academic programs and continuing to upgrade its facilities to meet the needs of our students. Mr. Toney's generosity is helping WBC take major steps forward as an institution," he said.

Jones thanked a number of people who helped with the estate gift, including Jerol Swaim, former Williams president, who served as the estate executor, and Bobby Gibson of the Waddell, Cole and Jones Law Firm, who assisted in the

legal aspects of the estate.

"We extend our deepest appreciation to Dr. Swaim and Mr. Gibson, as well as many others among Mr. Toney's extended family and friends who assisted in our efforts," Jones said. "It has been a pleasure working with them."

Williams Baptist, which is owned by the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, is a four-year college with an average enrollment of 500 students. It was founded in 1941 and celebrated its 75th anniversary in 2016.



ABCHomes launches new ministry to foster care community in Sebastian Co.

Stella Prather
ABCHomes

FORT SMITH - Arkansas Baptist Children's Homes and Family Ministries (ABCHomes) is expanding its ministry to link Arkansas Baptist churches in Sebastian County with the vast needs of the foster care community.

ABCHomes is launching "Connected," a foster care ministry to provide and/or mobilize resources needed to make foster care successful in Arkansas, while giving Baptist churches an opportunity to take an active role in ministry to foster care children and families and to state foster care workers.

Beginning in February, ABCHomes is kicking off the Connected ministry among Southern Baptist churches in the Concord Baptist Association (Fort Smith area). To date, Connected is ongoing in Pulaski, Miller and Mississippi counties, and leaders plan to later expand the Connected ministry in other Baptist associations around the state.

The program will help establish a structure for the foster care community; recruit, facilitate and provide training for foster families, in accordance with the Arkansas Division of Children and Families (DCFS); facilitate multi-church partnerships; and help improve the child welfare system through the involvement of the local church.

Hands-on support for foster families will be provided through local Concord Association churches. These support services include: prepared meals for foster families upon arrival of foster child, babysitting, tutoring, respite care, transportation, food/clothing closets and school supplies. In addition, Connected will link partnering Concord churches with DCFS Family Services workers, offering support, encouragement and other needed services. Additionally, assistance for birth families will also be obtainable through local churches.



Szczepanik

Lynn Szczepanik, who joined the ABCHomes staff Jan. 1, will serve as the foster care coordinator. Szczepanik holds a bachelor of arts degree in social work and a master of science in administration.

"So many children in Sebastian County need foster homes, and we (ABCHomes) have the opportunity to train families to become foster parents and support those families," said Szczepanik. "I believe we can make a difference in the lives of so many children."

There is a foster care crisis in the Fort Smith area, said Szczepanik. According to DCFS reports, 750 children in Sebastian County were in the Arkansas foster care system in January 2017.

Only 102 foster homes with 229 beds were available, leaving 521 more children than available beds in foster homes in Sebastian County.

For information on Connected in the Fort Smith area, email Szczepanik at lszczepanik@abchomes.org.

Stella Prather is communications director for ABCHomes.

ABN Digest

Stories of interest
to Arkansas Baptists

U.S. abortion rate hits all-time low

WASHINGTON (BP) - The abortion rate in the United States declined to an all-time low, while the number of lethal procedures dropped below a million for the first time since 1975, according to a new report.

The Guttmacher Institute reported Jan. 17 the rate fell to 14.6 abortions per 1,000 women 15 to 44 years old in 2014, which is a decline of 14 percent since its most recent survey in 2011. In its census of all known abortion providers in the country, Guttmacher found abortions totaled 958,700 in 2013 and 926,190 in 2014.

The abortion rate reached its zenith at 29.3 in 1980 and 1981, and the total number of abortions peaked at more than 1.6 million in 1990, according to Guttmacher.

Pro-life advocates welcomed the report and pointed to the work of pro-life citizens and legislators as a reason for the dramatic decline in abortions and their rate.

"The falling abortion number is due to the ceaseless advocacy and ministry of the pro-life community in neighborhoods all around this country," said Russell Moore, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC). "The pro-life movement advances by calling out to consciences with the truth of what unborn human life is and matching that call with real ministry to women in crisis."

Americans United for Life (AUL), the country's leader in helping state legislators pass pro-life laws, cited such policies, as well as technology, in explaining the trend. In 2016, 43 states considered more than 360 abortion-related measures, according to AUL's annual report.

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

Ark. couple continues fight against Glorieta sale

KIRK AND SUSIE Tompkins of Little Rock, who - with the sale of Glorieta Conference Center in 2013 - lost a lease on property on which they purchased a vacation home are continuing their legal battle after losing an appeal late last year.

The couple asked the full 12-member 10th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals Jan. 4 to review the Dec. 21 decision of a three-judge panel that the homeowners failed to state a legal claim when they filed their lawsuit without aid of an attorney in a lower court, Baptist News Global (BNG) reported.

"We have not yet thrown in the towel," Kirk Tompkins told BNG in an email Jan. 4.

The new filing by the couple claims the three-judge panel failed in its obligation to "go to particular pains" to protect "pro se" litigants untrained in law against consequences of technical errors that would not be tolerated coming from an experienced attorney, BNG reported.

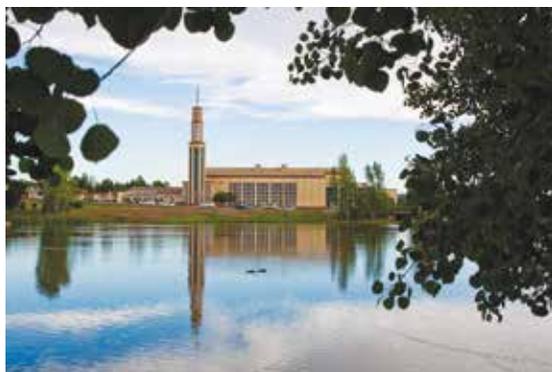
The Dec. 21 judgment mentioned the "liberal construction" due to litigants without

legal representation but found the couple failed to establish "a plausible claim" of wrongdoing by officials of LifeWay Christian Resources when they liquidated the 2,100-acre property near Santa Fe, N.M., for \$1 claiming financial losses in 24 of the previous 25 years.

The ownership group that purchased the campground offered homeowners options for phasing out their leases, but the Tompkins said none of the deals came close to the fair market value of their vacation home, the BNG report said. The couple claims home improvements were made based on "privately implied contracts" assuring that their recurring lease with Glorieta would be renewable for another 50 years.

Lower courts have dismissed the couple's breach-of-contract claim and ruled they lack standing to challenge whether the sale violated Southern Baptist Convention bylaws. The Tompkins argued in their original appeal that

the court should find sufficient evidence that the leases offered to homeowners were so one-sided in favor of LifeWay that they were legally "unconscionable," even though as inexperienced litigants the



couple "in-artfully" presented the claim in court documents, BNG reported.

The three-judge panel agreed that the lease arrangement "operated to the detriment" of the homeowners but not to a level required to "establish substantive unconscionability under New Mexico law."

The couple further claims that an attorney appointed by the court to present oral arguments on their behalf wasn't

adequately prepared for a Sept. 19 hearing in Denver. The most recent court filing says the lawyer didn't consult with the couple in preparing his case, and when a judge asked if he could cite case law to back

up one of his claims, their legal counsel surprised them by answering, "No sir."

The Glorieta homeowners say "fair-minded objective treatment" by the full court would allow them to provide legal precedent showing other courts "more interested in liberally deciding cases providing fair and moral justice to the deprived" in cases where an untrained plaintiff's "in-artful individual procedural pleading fail to be strictly interpreted."

Thom Rainer, president and CEO of LifeWay Christian Resources, said there is nothing new in the Tompkins' latest appeal.

"We have full confidence this latest effort will be denied by the court," Rainer said in a statement Jan. 5.

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)

How to avoid being 'kicked by the mule' of life

A dentist is overheard speaking to his patient as he bends over him with a hypodermic needle in hand: "You might feel a little sting. On the other hand, it might feel as though you've been kicked in the mouth by a mule."

My grandfather, Russell Yarbrough, raised mules on his farm in southeast Missouri. Subsequently, he was kicked or stepped on by a mule on numerous occasions.

I recall thinking when he showed me his toe that had been mangled by a mule stepping on it, "That must have really hurt!"

God has given us His Word so that we can read and study it, and to provide us with a

road map for what's ahead.

Through reading and delving into His Word, we are to know Truth – so that we can avoid being "kicked by the mule" of life.

However, how can we follow the road map if we don't read it, study it and "digest" it on a daily basis?

I know friends and

family who are making an effort to read through the Bible in 2017.

However, just like a New Year's diet or workout plan, sometimes good intentions can die out in just a few short months. It takes commitment and tenacity to stay with it to the very end.

In December, I completed reading through the Bible for

the seventh consecutive year.

While I have a wonderful feeling of accomplishment of reading through God's Word for yet another year, I have been feeling a bit robbed by the practice of "simply reading through the Bible" and plan to take a bit of a different approach this year.

Rather than focus all of my attention on completing daily Bible readings to keep up with a plan, I am going to make more of an effort to pause and study different passages of Scripture and sections that I want to understand better.

Already by doing this, I have been amazed at how a verse or passage has "come to life" and led me to a deeper understanding of the context.

As leaders, we can often-times get caught up in the

task of preparation and miss something special that God wants to say to us by going through the motions of reading our Bible, such as preparing for a sermon, to lead a Sunday school class or to par-

ticipate in Bible study.

For me, I plan to pause and relish Scripture in 2017, not just devour it like some fast food meal for quick calories.

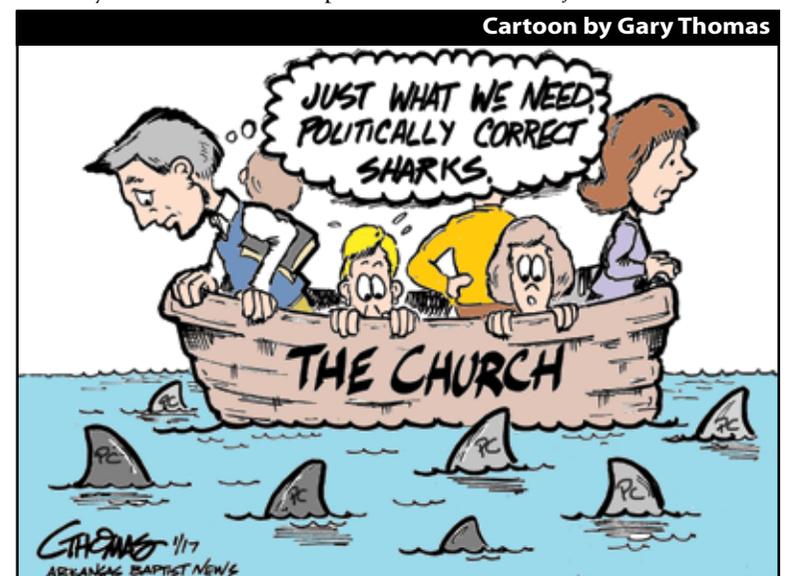
Tim Yarbrough is editor/executive director of the ABN.



Pressing On

Tim Yarbrough

Phil. 3:14



Discipleship: The biblical way to grow a church

New church methodology demands that we develop a mission statement and a vision statement for every church.

As a pastor and an associational missionary, I have seen churches not only struggle with this concept, but also with the implementation of these statements after they had been formulated. Because I was a single staff pastor, the burden of implementation always fell upon me, and I was already overwhelmed with the demands of my churches. As an associational missionary, I went through the same process with the same results. It

was up to me to see that everything was done. Remember that a mule is smarter than we preachers. If you overload a mule, he will refuse to do anything, but we preachers will work ourselves to death.

I knew that there had been a better way because this way was about to kill me. As I studied Scrip-

ture, it became clear to me the purpose of every church is the same. In reality we already have our mission statement for both churches and associations. According to Matthew 28:19, we are to make disciples. Then the question to be asked is, "What is a disciple?" Many would simply say a fol-

lower of someone, or in the case of Christians, a follower of Jesus. *Webster's Dictionary* says a disciple is "one who accepts and assists in spreading the doctrines of another." The truth that is clear is that we have many members, but few disciples.

Why is this true? Our main concern as Southern Baptists has been to see people born again. This seems fine until we start comparing them to babies. If we took a newborn baby and set that baby aside and said, "God bless you; grow up on your own," we would be arrested for child abuse. Oftentimes a new believer is just as ignorant of the Word of God and the things of God as a new baby is of the world. So we must

begin to take seriously the command to make disciples. This involves personal interaction with new believers. Unfortunately, many of us were never disciplined ourselves and, therefore, do not know how to disciple others.

These things should be obvious: 1) A pastor cannot disciple a whole church. Jesus only had 12 disciples, and one of them was a traitor. The pastor should choose three or four men, preferably younger men, to invest time in and to train. 2) This is a long-term commitment. Jesus disciplined the 12 for three-and-one-half years, and we can never accomplish what Jesus did in this length of time. 3) We will not have success with all the ones we choose. 4) The

ones we are training must quickly begin to disciple others. While they are being disciplined, one of the best ways to grow is to impart their training to someone else.

5) If we don't begin to produce disciples, our pastors will be worn out from trying to do everything, but more importantly the church will die.

I have a heart for discipleship, and everything I am sharing I plan to implement in my own church. Your method for making disciples can be totally different than mine, but we must begin to disciple people.

Lewis Gentry is a former associational missionary and the current pastor of Marlbrook Baptist Church in Blevins.



Viewpoint

Lewis Gentry



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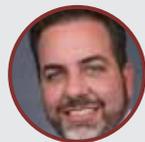
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Foundations 260



Family Matters

Ben Phillips

Reading the Bible consistently is a vital part of one's spiritual growth journey. I grew up in a Christian home going to church weekly but did not really begin to read my Bible consistently until college. I read through the entire Bible for the first time when I was 20. I had been a believer for 10 years. I missed out on a decade of significant spiritual growth because I didn't have a regular diet of God's Word.

Since my college days I have read through the Bible numerous times in different versions. One of my goals since marriage is to help my spouse and my children become avid readers of the Bible as well. Selecting a Bible reading plan all of us are working through together has been helpful. It keeps us on the same page, and we can easily discuss what we are learning with one another.

This year we are using Robby Gallaty's Foundations 260, which is a 260-day reading plan Monday-Friday covering 260 foundational chapters in the Bible. Saturday and Sunday are used for catching up if you've had a busy week or additional reading. There are some different books that go along with the reading, but we are just using the reading plan. You can access a PDF of the plan at replicate.org under "Resources," and then select "The F260 Bible Reading Plan." There is also an app that my teenagers enjoy using.

While driving in the car together this week, I was able to have a conversation with my daughter about what she read. She shared how God was challenging her to have more faith as she was learning about the example of Abraham. I shared about how God was increasing my vision for passing along the faith to them and my eventual grandchildren after reading Genesis 18:19.

My goal as a disciple-maker of my children is to help them develop the discipline of reading God's Word daily and then understanding and applying what they are reading. Engaging your family daily in reading God's Word will enable them to grow spiritually in a way that will set them on a trajectory to make a significant kingdom impact.

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

Let's have an incredible year!

The new year is here with all of the promise and hope that come for those who serve an incredible God. Evangelism must be one of our greatest priorities as we seek to honor our Lord this year. Several ingredients need to be present in our churches to create a climate for evangelism.

First, there must be simple and pure passion to see unbelievers saved. Someone has well said that evangelism is as much "caught" as it is "taught." Our church members need to hear about this passion from the pulpit, in worship songs, Sunday school and small group lessons, youth meetings and every event the church conducts. Praying for revival and awakening and praying for unsaved people by name help drive this passion for evangelism.

Training and modeling are also vitally important in motivating our members to participate in outreach. Church members can't merely be pushed into evangelistic participation; they must be trained. This training may include topics like personal evangelism; leading a child to Christ; how to include evangelism in events such as block parties, sportsmen banquets or DNews, and how to lead off-campus evangelistic Bible studies.



Executive Directions

Sonny Tucker

Other components to effective church evangelism are calendaring and budgeting. Evangelistic events and training must be on the calendar. Evangelism must be a budget item that reflects it as one of the top priorities of the church.

Finally, biblical evangelism is disciple-making evangelism and not mere decision-making evangelism. There must be an intentional plan in place where new believers are discipled into the Christian walk and assimilated into the life of the Church.

The Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC) evangelism and church health team and your associational missionary stand ready to assist you in personal training or in obtaining training material that suits your church's personal needs.

I would like to invite you to the ABSC Conference on Evangelism and Church Health on Jan. 30-31 with some of the greatest leaders in the nation speaking on the topics of evangelism and prayer.

May God grant you and your church an incredible year of blessings and evangelism!

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

A 'certificate of joy'

Last night I received a recognition that brought great satisfaction and joy to my life. Now, I have certificates and awards that hang on my office wall, sit on my office desk or are buried somewhere in a box in the closet or garage. Each recognizes a contribution I made to an organization or a personal accomplishment. However, there was something special about the award I received last night that sets it apart from the others.

It's just a simple certificate printed on an 8 1/2 x 11" piece of yellow cardstock. The print is not that great. No color. Just black ink that appears to have come from a printer in need of the toner being replaced. It was presented to me last night at the monthly meeting of the Stuttgart School Board by the assistant principal of our elementary school. Several others in our community were recognized with the same "Certificate of Award" for our participation in a mentoring program this past semester with third grade students. Specifically, we each had one student we were assigned to meet with on a weekly basis. These students had been identified by their teacher as someone who could benefit from outside intervention. Each student's parent(s) or guardian(s) approved the student's participation in the program.

I will confess that initially I became involved in the program because one of the two third grade teachers who approached the principal about this need just happens to live at the same address I do. Although I don't remember the exact conversation we had prior to the implementation of this program, I knew there was no way I was getting out of this. So, I gave up and gave in. What an incredible experience it has been.

Once a week, I would meet "M" for lunch. He's a little squirt, but he's cool! At first, he was quite reserved and not too sure about what was about to take place. My questions were mostly answered with a nod or shake of the head or

perhaps a shrug of the shoulders. Since that initial encounter, we've talked about a variety of topics including family, sports, interests, likes and dislikes. Along the way, we've had some fairly deep talks on values like honesty, courage, self-control and kindness. Tomorrow I will meet with "M" for our first weekly visit of the semester. I will take his favorite food, either a Sonic cheeseburger with mayo, pickle and tomato along with a green apple Jolly Rancher slushy or a cheese pizza, and we will invest in each other's life. See, our little talks have helped me to grow as well.

I will value this piece of yellow cardstock because of what it represents: a new friendship and an opportunity to shape and encourage a young life.

Could it be that's what Jesus had in mind when He gave the commission to "go and make disciples of all nations"? Recently, I was reminded that three essential ingredients in the making of disciples are relationships, authenticity and intentionality. "Go and make" speaks of intentionality. "Teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you" speaks of investing your life in others, showing the gospel by living the gospel, not just disseminating information.

My weekly visits with "M" are helping me to formulate some important questions about how our church is making disciples. Do we have an intentional disciple-making process in place? Is that plan working? Are we intentionally connecting newer disciples with maturing disciples? Are we creating a culture where relationships that are open, honest and real are the key to our

disciple-making process? Arkansas Baptists, we would do well to evaluate our current disciple-making process with these three ingredients in mind. We are called to be disciples who make disciples. In this way, the church grows as the kingdom advances.

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



President's Perspective

Sam Roberts



Panel urges defunding of Planned Parenthood

WASHINGTON (BP) – Planned Parenthood should no longer receive federal funds, a special congressional panel has recommended following a nearly 15-month investigation.

The Select Investigative Panel on Infant Lives issued its final report Jan. 3 into the practices of abortion providers and others involved in the fetal tissue procurement business. The report not only called for congressional action to protect unborn children and their mothers, but it also recommended restrictions on government grants to abortion providers and on research using fetal tissue.

Congress established the panel – which operated under the umbrella of the House of Representatives Committee on Energy and Commerce – in October 2015 after undercover videos allegedly provided evidence Planned Parenthood was trading in body parts from aborted babies.

The secretly recorded videos appeared to show various executives of the country's No. 1 abortion provider discussing their sale of fetal parts, as well as their willingness to manipulate the lethal procedure to preserve organs for sale and use.

“What the investigative panel discovered is what many of us already knew existed – a predatory industry that exploits women and families,” said Steven Harris, director of advocacy for the Southern Baptist Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission.

Steven Aden, senior counsel for Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF), said of the panel's findings on Planned Parenthood, “Congress should end taxpayer subsidies of an abortion business ... It's time to end this immoral partnership that has been forced upon the American people.”

The Planned Parenthood Federation of America (PPFA) and its affiliates received \$553.7 million in government grants and reimbursements in its latest financial year, 2014-15. Planned Parenthood's affiliates performed 323,999 abortions during 2013-14, the most recent reporting year for

which statistics are available.

Planned Parenthood's receipt of federal funds has long produced opposition from Republicans and support from Democrats. Last January, then-President Barack Obama vetoed legislation that would have eliminated about 90 percent of federal money for PPEFA during the year. In mid-December, the Obama administration issued a final rule that effectively blocks states from prohibiting federal family planning funds for Planned Parenthood and other abortion providers.

President Trump has pledged to work to defund PPEFA.

In its report, the panel asserted there was evidence some tissue-procurement companies illegally profited from the trade in body parts from aborted babies. One of the procurement firms, StemExpress, increased its revenue from about \$156,000 in 2010 to \$4.5 million in 2014 in its role as a middleman between abortion clinics and researchers, according to the report.

Planned Parenthood denied it made a profit but refused to provide accounting documents to demonstrate its claim, the panel reported.

The report said, “[T]he relationships that have formed between tissue procurement companies, abortion clinics, and universities are fraught with questionable practices, including the possible use of illegal, late-term abortion practices to procure fetal tissues and organs, violations of federal laws and regulations on patient consent, and systematic violations of patients' HIPAA rights,” which protect the confidentiality of health-care information.

The panel listed in the report 15 referrals it made for possible criminal or regulatory violations. In some cases, the referrals were for potential violations of federal or state laws by Planned Parenthood and other abortion clinics. The referrals also included possible illegal profiting from the sale of baby body parts by StemExpress and other tissue-procurement companies.



REALITY WEEKEND – First Baptist Church, Benton, hosted a RealityWeekend youth event Jan. 13-15. The event was the first stop of The Lift Tour, a 21-city youth ministry tour produced by Student Leadership University and LifeWay Students. Nearly 1,200 students and youth leaders from 20 Arkansas Baptist churches took part in the event. LU Worship Collective (above), the campus band of Liberty University in Lynchburg, Va., led worship during the event. Speakers included Darren Whitehead, pastor of Church of the City in Nashville, Tenn., and Jeff Wallace, executive director of The Lift Tour. Illusionist Jared Hall provided entertainment. *Photo by Caleb Yarbrough*

ABSC Agencies

Prayer partners needed

2016 was an incredible year for Arkansas Baptist Children's Homes and Family Ministries. As the year began, we had just opened the Little Rock Family Care Home and were in the process of launching Connected Foster Care. We closed 2016 with the groundbreaking of the Springdale Family Care Home.

I believe the biggest key to our success was the prayers of the churches and individuals who love this ministry.

When speaking in churches, I often say, “There are four ways you help us: 1) Provide financial support; 2) Plan to remember us in your estate planning; 3) Participate in a mission activity at, or for, one of our programs and 4) most importantly, Pray.

I want to suggest specific ways you can pray for us in 2017.



ABCHomes

David Perry

1) Pray about construction work and planning. Contractors are working on the Springdale Family Care Home. Pray for workers' safety, good weather and an overall smooth process. We are in conversation with an architect regarding the construction of a complex including new staff offices and guest housing at the Boys Ranch. To complete this project, additional funding will be needed. Following major gifts received this fall, we are studying the feasibility of building a new family home, for 16 children and three sets of houseparents, at the Arkansas Baptist Home for Children. This project would also require additional funding.

2) Pray for Connected Foster Care. This ministry, which began with a pilot program in North Little Rock, has expanded to Mississippi, Miller and Sebastian counties. There is the potential for our agency

to have a far-reaching impact on the foster care crisis throughout many areas of our state.

3) Pray for houseparents. We have one family home for eight teenage girls at the Children's Home in Monticello closed due to lack of houseparenting staff.

4) Pray for favorable legislation. In 2016, there were repeated efforts to pass legislation on the federal level that would have had a negative impact on residential child care ministries like ours. We expect similar efforts in 2017.

5) Pray for those we serve through residential child care, family care for single moms, counseling and family foster care. Pray that God will bless them with immediate, generational and eternal differences in their lives.

6) Pray for our staff and trustees.

Thank you for being our partners in ministry and prayer warriors.

David Perry is executive director of ABCHomes.

1957 SBC president from Ark. drew MLK's praise

LITTLE ROCK - Though Southern Baptists were not known for their advocacy of racial justice 60 years ago, Martin Luther King Jr. once told a fellow black Baptist minister that the 1957 Southern Baptist Convention president "suffered with us" in the cause of civil rights.

King's reference was to the late U.S. Rep. Brooks Hays, D-Ark., who served as SBC president from 1956-58. After helping to mediate a conflict over integration at Central High School in Little Rock, Hays lost his bid for reelection to a ninth term in Congress to a write-in segregationist candidate.

Six years later, Hays was serving as special assistant to President John F. Kennedy, and he walked by the door of a room in the White House where King was sitting as he waited to meet with the president. "Mr. Hays," King called out, according to an oral history of Hays by Ronald Tonks.

Hays stopped, and King, turning to the Baptist minister who accompanied him, said, "Mr. Hays has suffered with us."

That statement, Hays said, was "a reference to the Little Rock experience and my defeat." He added, "I can't remember anything else he said ... I never could forget that."

Hays the mediator

In 1957, Little Rock's school board stood ready to begin court-ordered desegregation of local public schools, beginning with Central High. But Gov. Orval Faubus, fearing

violence and convinced a majority of Arkansans opposed integration, deployed the Arkansas National Guard to prevent nine black students from entering the school.

As tensions escalated, Hays helped organize a meeting between Faubus and President Dwight Eisenhower. Hays also served as a go-between for state and federal officials for two weeks, hoping for peaceful desegregation, according to his memoir, "A Southern Moderate Speaks."

When violence broke out, Eisenhower ordered the U.S. Army's 101st Airborne Division to enforce integration, and many segregationists saw Hays as a crucial foe of their cause.

During the conflict, King sent Eisenhower a telegram urging "a strong forthright stand." Following the president's deployment of the 101st, King wrote in another telegram, "I wish to express my sincere support for the stand you have taken to restore law and order in Little Rock ... Spiritual forces cannot emerge in a situation of mob violence."

The 101st remained at Central from mid-September until December, Hays wrote. Federalized National Guard troops didn't leave until the end of the school year.

The episode left Arkansas Baptists divided.

Pastors of three churches that cooperated with the Arkansas Baptist State Convention signed a letter condemning Faubus' deploy-

ment of the National Guard, and one pastor joined a coalition commending the governor, the *Arkansas Baptist News* (ABN) reported.

ABN Editor Edwin McDonald editorialized that "since the race issue is one that finds our Baptists of the state on the fence and on both sides of the fence ... we are taking no stand either for or against integration."

Sam Agee, a former Arkansas Air National Guardsman who was deployed to Central High, remembers Hays as principled and courageous.

Hays "was standing up for what he believed in," Agee, 82, said. "... He thought that he was doing what was right."

Agee, a life-long Southern Baptist, said he didn't feel animosity toward African Americans in 1957. Still, he thought blacks "had their own schools," and he "wondered why we would want to cause problems" by integrating.

During the desegregation standoff, black students approached Agee and fellow guardsmen, he said. An officer "told them that they couldn't come in."

As years passed, however, Agee said he realized schools for black students "probably weren't as good as Little Rock Central High" and separate was not equal.

'Southern moderate'

Hays seemed intent to win over citizens like Agee, who voted for him in defeat during the 1958 election.

While Hays sought equal justice for people of all races, he held "a strong states' rights bent" and believed "enforcement of [civil rights] legislation" should "be left to the states rather than the federal government," according to a 2003 article by historian Terry Goddard in the journal *Baptist History and Heritage*.

In 1956 Hays joined other Southern congressmen in



Brooks Hays (right) helped arrange a meeting between Arkansas Gov. Orval Faubus (center) and U.S. President Dwight Eisenhower when conflict arose over the desegregation of a Little Rock high school. SBHLA photos

signing the infamous "Southern Manifesto," which argued against racial integration of public places. But later he said he regretted that action, Goddard wrote.

Hays labelled himself a "southern moderate," noting the only use of the word moderation in Scripture is positive (Phil. 4:5, KJV).

"The word 'moderation' as generally used fits my approach," Hays wrote. "And I am a Southerner. I speak as an American, too, and as one who believes that sectional conflicts can be harmonized and that the national interest can be conserved through an appeal to reason and to reasonableness on both sides."

Civil rights 'solutions'

In the aftermath of the Little Rock crisis, Hays not only lost his seat in Congress, he also received an icy reception from at least one Baptist state convention he addressed in

his capacity as SBC president, Hays wrote in "A Southern Moderate Speaks."

Additionally, he felt compelled to urge Billy Graham to cancel an evangelistic meeting scheduled for Little Rock because the city was "in a state of shock," Hays wrote. Graham heeded the advice.

In lauding Hays, King apparently believed his "moderation" included praiseworthy elements, including the price he paid for not embracing segregationists. Perhaps another feature King admired was Hays' belief that Christians should help lead the country in racial reconciliation.

"In the last analysis," Hays wrote, "it will be the churches and the local community of organizations that will provide solutions to the problems of civil rights."

This article was written by David Roach of Baptist Press, the *Southern Baptist Convention's* news service.



Rep. Brooks Hays, D-Ark., served as Southern Baptist Convention president from 1956-58. In 1957, President Dwight Eisenhower called in troops from the Army's 101st Airborne Division to ensure the desegregation of Central High School in Little Rock.




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BOSNIA

continued from page one

and today averages 100 most Sundays.

Unfortunately, not many Bosnians attend their church because the Muslim group is tough to reach – with only .01 percent claiming to be Christians.

Lately, however, “things happening here have been pretty unbelievable,” Helmbacher said.

A Bosnian Muslim woman who works in Affton named Zehra recounted to Rachelle Helmbacher that a Lutheran pastor shared Jesus with her 10 years ago. To Zehra, Jesus made more sense than Islam.

“I don’t know why I’m telling you this,” she told Rachelle.

“I do,” Rachelle said. “My

husband is a pastor.”

Another Bosnian couple attended a Church at Affton service last month because a woman from Bosnia spoke on Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) – something the couple has struggled with lately. The speaker, Enisa Balogun, a former Muslim who converted to Christianity during the Bosnian War, now lives in St. Louis and has an office at the Church of Affton. She holds a Christian seminary degree in counseling and specializes in PTSD.

“Enisa’s the key to reaching Bosnians,” Helmbacher said, calling her a “high-powered leader.” But, she’s going by faith that God will provide a salary. That’s one-way church partnerships from Arkansas can help, Helmbacher said.

One Arkansas church that currently partners with the Church at Affton is Grand Av-

enue Baptist Church in Fort Smith.

“We have 16 partnerships like this internationally and nationally,” said mission pastor and Helmbacher’s brother-in-law, Scott Ward. Helmbacher seemed a “natural fit” for Grand Avenue, said Ward. “Jason’s dad used to be a pastor here, and Jason’s preached a number of times in the interim period. A lot of people know him.”

Additionally, other Arkansas churches are planning mission endeavors in the St. Louis region – such as Park Hill Baptist Church in North Little Rock.

“We’re getting ready to kick off a partnership with Ignite Church in Breese, Ill., a city just east of St. Louis,” said Marty Davis, missions coordinator. The church took a vision trip there in May 2016. Park Hill already sponsors a church in Seattle and will continue to do so, but wanted something closer to home.

Though in initial planning stages, Park Hill has already budgeted money to start sending monthly contributions.

“We feel good about this and excited about what can come of it,” Davis said.

Lisa Falknor is the northwest regional correspondent for the Arkansas Baptist News



The Helmbacher family (from left): Rachelle, Jason, Hannah, 15, and Isaac, 11. Jason Helmbacher is pastor of the Church at Affton in St. Louis. He is one of the featured speakers at Mission Connection 2017 Jan. 28 at the Baptist Building in Little Rock. (Below left), Helmbacher speaks at a church in Sarajevo, Bosnia.

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Union to mark 500th anniversary of Reformation

JACKSON, Tenn. – To celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation's beginning, Union University's Ryan Center for Biblical Studies will host a REF500 festival March 9-11.

Martin Luther took hammer and nail to the door of the Wittenberg Chapel in Germany in 1517, setting in motion a series of events that changed the world. Ray Van Neste, director of the Ryan Center and professor of biblical studies at Union, said Luther was motivated primarily by pastoral concern about his people being deceived into believing that they could buy forgiveness of their sins.

The Protestant Reformation that followed was, according to Van Neste, the greatest revival in the history of the church after Pentecost.

"That's a big claim, but I think it's true," Van Neste said. "I think oftentimes people miss seeing the Reformation as a revival. But, that's what (the people involved) see it as. I think sometimes people think of it as merely an academic thing, but it comes out of pastoral concern."

"This is a recovery of the gospel. It's a rejuvenation or revival of the church."

The central piece to Union's celebration of the Reformation is REF500, a

three-day festival with lectures from visiting scholars, breakout sessions covering a variety of topics, a music concert by Union's music department, an art exhibit, a film showing and a Bible exhibit.

Van Neste said since the church in the United States is often dormant, lackluster and looking for renewal, believers should look to great times of renewal in the past, such as the Reformation, for lessons that are relevant today.

"If we look back carefully, we can see forward more clearly," he said.

Plenary speakers for the event include Timothy George, dean of Beeson Divinity School; David Lyle Jeffrey, distinguished professor of literature and the humanities at Baylor University; Peter Leithart, president of the Theopolis Institute; and Carl Trueman, the Paul Woolley Chair of Church History at Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia.

Fifteen breakout sessions will cover the Reformation's far-reaching contributions.

"This recovery of the gospel did lead to salvation most centrally, but it led to a change in the way politics, education and science were done," Van Neste said. "I want us to see how it affects all of life."

Prior to REF500, the Ryan Center will host an all-day festival of preaching on campus March 8. Five preachers will address each of the five "solas" that were the themes of the Reformation – "Scripture Alone," "Christ Alone," "Grace Alone," "Faith Alone" and "To God Alone Be Glory."

The event, co-sponsored by the Tennessee Baptist Convention, begins at 10 a.m. and is

free and open to the public.

The five preachers scheduled are Steve Gaines, senior pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis and president of the Southern Baptist Convention; Fred Shackelford, senior pastor of Ellendale Baptist Church in Bartlett, Tenn.; Justin Wainwright, pastor of First Baptist Church in Jackson, Tenn.; Eric Smith, senior pastor of Sharon Baptist Church in Savannah, Tenn.; and Jim Shaddix, professor of preaching at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Choral groups from across West Tennessee will provide music for each of the preaching services.

"Preaching comes to new life coming out of the Reformation, and preaching is actually what's pressing the Reformation," Van Neste said. "It goes forth because of popular public preaching. So we wanted not just to talk about it, but to do it."

To bookend the REF500 festival, Union will host a Scripture reading marathon March 6-7 and March 13-14 in which 400 volunteers will read for 10 minutes each under Miller Tower on the Union campus. The reading will begin at 6:30 a.m. each day and go until midnight, and by the end of the fourth day, the entire Bible will have been read.

Van Neste said Union faculty, staff, students, alumni and other community members are

needed as readers. B&H Publishing Group is co-sponsoring the marathon and will debut its new Christian Standard Bible at the event.

While other conferences will celebrate the Reformation's 500th anniversary, Nathan Finn, dean of Union's School of Theology and Mis-

sions, said the events at Union form arguably the most diverse conference of its kind in North America.

"I'm unaware of another conference that is giving so much attention to the variety of ways the Reformation has shaped not just theology and church practice, but western culture itself," Finn said. "Union is a Christ-centered, comprehensive university that is committed to the liberal arts, the sciences and the professions. The REF 500 Conference is exactly the sort of interdisciplinary event that a university like ours ought to be hosting."

Registration for REF500 covers all meals and conference sessions, and the first 150 registrants will receive a free copy of the book, "Echoes of the Reformation: Five Truths that Shape the Christian Life," by Brandon D. Smith.

More information, online registration for REF500, the full schedule for the festival of preaching and a signup page for the Scripture reading marathon are available at uu.edu/events/ref500.



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Christian persecution increases; N. Korea No. 1

WASHINGTON (BP) – North Korea ranks as the most dangerous country for Christians for the 16th consecutive time after a year in which the persecution of Christians continued to rise, according to a new report.

The report was issued as religious freedom advocates call for President Donald Trump to act in the first 100 days of his administration to protect Christians and other people of faith overseas.

About 215 million Christians underwent “high, very high or extreme persecution” last year in 50 countries, the Open Doors World Watch List reported Jan. 11. Open Doors – which has served the persecuted church overseas for more than 60 years – defines persecution as hostility endured by a person because of his identification with Christ. It can include loss of property, imprisonment, torture, rape and death.

According to Open Doors, the top 10 countries where Christians face the most severe persecution and their totals on a 100-point system are: 1) North Korea, 92 points; 2) Somalia, 91; 3) Afghanistan, 89; 4) Pakistan, 88; 5) Sudan, 87; 6) Syria, 86; 7) Iraq, 86; 8) Iran, 85; 9) Yemen, 85, and 10) Eritrea, 82.

Open Doors' list “is a crucial and sobering source of information to help Christians know how to pray and advocate for their persecuted brothers and sisters,” said Travis Wussow, vice president for public policy, as well as general counsel, for the Southern Baptist Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission. “This advocacy makes a real difference in shaping U.S. policy, which can in turn play a crucial role in protecting the persecuted church around the world.”

In written remarks for Baptist Press, Wussow encouraged “all believers to review the report and select one or

two countries and pray for the church there by name.”

David Curry, president of Open Doors, said the list clearly shows Christians in the West “need to advocate on behalf of those who do not have the same religious freedom privileges we do.”

Curry and others have urged Trump, who was inaugurated Jan. 20, to take steps in the opening days of his administration to protect international religious liberty. The 21st Century Wilberforce Initiative has drafted – and solicited signers to – a letter urging the president to retain or nominate in his first 100 days an ambassador-at-large for international religious freedom and a special advisor for religious minorities in the Near East and South/Central Asia.

Both those positions in the U.S. State Department could be vacant by the end of January.

David Saperstein, whose work as ambassador-at-large the past two years has been commended by conservatives and liberals, apparently will have to leave his post by the inauguration, according to a Trump transition memo first reported by *The New York Times*, *World* magazine said in a Jan. 9 article.

Knox Thames, also highly regarded across the board for

his service the past 16 months as the first special advisor for religious minorities, will lose his job Jan. 31 unless the Trump administration retains him, *World* reported.

Sen. James Lankford, R-Okla. – a Southern Baptist – told *World*, “During this unconventional transition, I encourage the Trump administration to make religious freedom positions a priority and maintain key offices within the State Department.”

North Korea is a communist country that enforces worship of its leader, Muslim extremism remained the primary force driving persecution last year, with Islamic forces instigating it in 35 of the 50 countries, according to Open Doors.

Persecution increased especially in South and Southeast Asia, reaching levels of violence experienced in such areas as the Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa, Open Doors reported. In Asia, the persecution was “fueled by dramatic religious nationalism and government insecurity,” according to Open Doors. Commonly, teetering governments scapegoated Christians.

Pakistan, which moved from No. 6 to No. 4 this year, was the most violent country, surpassing the violence in north-

ern Nigeria by Muslims against Christians. India reached its highest ranking ever at No. 15 because of Hindu violence toward Christians.

In its research to compile the World Watch List, Open Doors measures the freedom of Christians in five areas of life – private, family, community, national and church. Its researchers also gauge the degree of violence.

Release of the latest Open Doors list followed a Dec. 30 report of a study by the Italian-based Center for Studies on New Religions, which found Christians are the world's most persecuted faith group. Using an admittedly broader defi-

inition of dying for religious reasons, the study reported nearly 90,000 Christians died for their faith in 2016, according to the *International Business Times*.

The full report of the 2017 Open Doors World Watch List is available at opendoorsusa.org/christian-persecution/world-watch-list/.

Last year, the State Department designated 10 “countries of particular concern,” a category reserved for especially severe violators of religious liberty. They were Burma, China, Eritrea, Iran, North Korea, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.



Screen capture of North and South Korea from Google Maps.



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arkansasbaptist.org

DEBT

continued from page one

and the church stepped out on its "journey of faith."

On the church's pledge Sunday for the financial campaign, \$15 million was pledged. Carter explained that many church members determined what they could give and then "God said, 'Do more.'" One couple, in particular, doubled their initial pledge commitment. When the husband died a few years later, his life insurance was able to cover what was left of their pledge.

Through the years, the church added a significant part of the debt to its operating budget.

Now that the debt has been paid in full, Carter said, "The freedom is massive. To have the freedom and flexibility to allocate those resources to other needs is incredible. It's been freeing."

There is freedom "to dream huge," he said, and to ask, "God, what do you want us to do?"

Another newly debt-free church, Park Hill Baptist Church in North Little Rock is seeking God's will for its future.

"We want to be a church of vision ... with a heart for the future," said pastor Shaddox.

On Thanksgiving 2016 weekend, Park Hill celebrated retiring an about \$3 million

debt and being debt-free, a status the church had not enjoyed in decades. During the celebration service, Shaddox said, "There was joy of accomplishment and joy of knowing God had seen us through to His glory," he said.

"It was a special service, long to be remembered."

A few years ago, Park Hill "wanted to dream a little bit. We were dreaming - thinking about the future, about reaching people - but there's a price tag for that," he said, and the

congregation borrowed some money.

Through the years, as the church paid down its debt, he said his church members had "generous hands and open hearts."

Park Hill is a congregation of "good-hearted people who love Jesus and love the local church," he said, who have given generously and faithfully

toward debt pay-off. The years of paying down a debt, Shaddox said, were years of "seeing people being faithful to God and how God rewards that."

Shaddox said, "There was a stage when local churches thought success was buildings. At the stage we're at, it's people. People count. We're trying to pour into touching people, connecting with people.

"We're pouring more into people than into buildings," he said, adding that recently Park Hill has entered a partnership with a church planter in the St. Louis area (see related story page 1).

Both ministers have words of advice for other churches trying to pay down debt.

"Mentality ... is really key," said Shaddox, urging a "God can" mentality, rather than a "God can't" mentality.

"There's something about

giving that's in the heartbeat of our Savior," said the pastor, who also urged perseverance. "God enables us and blesses us to give.

"Stay positive. Love people. Stay fresh with the Lord. God can do great things through any church, whatever size it might be," Shaddox said.

As a congregation works toward paying down its debt, Carter said, "Continue to equip the saints to live out a lifestyle of denying self and not falling in love with the things of this world. Stay tethered and faithful to the Lord. That's the hard work of discipleship.

"Lean forward in casting vision. What are the opportunities and the possibilities if we were free from this (financial) obligation? Stay faithful."

Contact Margaret Colson at margaret@arkansasbaptist.org.



Carter



Shaddox

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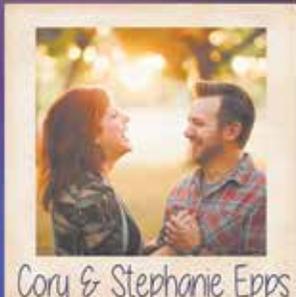


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Romans 8:37



"No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us"

Obituaries



Karen Louise Spillyards May, 69, of North Little Rock died Dec. 13.

May was a member of Park Hill Baptist Church and was retired from Baring Cross Baptist Church in North Little Rock where she served 17 years as a ministry assistant.

May was preceded in death by her father and brother.

She is survived by her husband of 50 years, W. Thomas May, her mother, a brother, a son and a daughter, and three grandsons.

Funeral services were held Dec. 19 at Park Hill Baptist Church in North Little Rock.

Burial followed at Grace-land Cemetery in Pine Bluff.

Nan B. Ashcraft, 93, of Benton died Dec. 20.

Her husband John S. Ashcraft, was a former pastor of Brookwood Baptist Church in Little Rock.

She was a member of Calvary Baptist Church in Little Rock.

Ashcraft is preceded in death by her husband and one grandchild.

She is survived by a son, a daughter, a brother, three grandchildren, 12 great-grandchildren and one great-great grandchild.

Funeral services were held Dec. 23 at Ashby Funeral Home in Benton.

Burial took place at Ebenezer Cemetery in Tull.

Church life

Tumbling Shoals Baptist Church, Tumbling Shoals, will host its annual Wild Game Supper at 6:30 p.m. March 9. Steve "Wildman" Wilson is scheduled to speak. For more information, call the church office at 501-362-3987.

The Kinsman Quartet will perform at **Southside Baptist Church in Heber Springs**, at 11 a.m. Feb. 12.

Two students from Arkansas were awarded degrees during commencement services Dec. 17 at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary in New Orleans, La.

Ferrel Duffel, Jr., of Potts-

2nd, Russellville, names Dawson

RUSSELLVILLE - Billy Dawson, formerly of Nashville, has been named the senior pastor of Second Baptist Church, 1100 N Frankfort Ave., in Russellville.

He has served as interim pastor since August 2016 and is head football coach at Russellville High School. His wife, Karen, teaches at Russellville Middle School. The couple's children, Luke and Rachel, are both students at Ouachita Baptist University in Arkadelphia. Billy Dawson is a native of Pine Bluff.



Dawson

ville, and pastor of First Baptist Church, Atkins, received a doctor of ministry degree.

James Hawkins of Fayetteville received a doctor of philosophy degree.

Hawkins serves as area director of the Arkansas Baptist Children's Homes and Family

Ministries' Fayetteville office.

On the move

Gerald Bounds is serving as pastor of McJester Baptist Church in Pangburn.

arkansasbaptist.org

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Classifieds

PASTOR

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

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

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

Beech Street Baptist Church in Gurdon, AR

is seeking a **full-time pastor**. Please send resume to P.O. Box 408, Gurdon, AR 71743.

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.

Smithville Baptist Church seeking either **bi-vocational or full-time pastor**. Please send resume to P.O. Box 37, Smithville, AR 72466.

First Baptist Church, Gillham, is seeking a **full-time pastor**. Please send resumes to Pastor Search Committee, c/o Vona McKinley, 332 Pendergrass Road, Horatio, AR 71842.

OTHER STAFF POSITIONS

First Baptist Church Cherokee Village is prayerfully seeking a **full-time associate pastor/youth pastor**. If interested, please send your resume to fbcv@centurytel.net or 6 Iroquois Dr., Cherokee Village, AR 72529.

FBC, DeWitt is searching for the **man God**

has to lead our music and youth ministries. This is a F/T opportunity. Submit resumes by March 1 to office@fbc-dewitt.com ATTN: Personnel Committee.

FBC Lockesburg is seeking a **part-time music minister**. Please send resume to mayes4316@gmail.com.

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

Hickory Creek Baptist Church in Lowell seeks **bi-vocational youth leader**. Resume to jstuckey@jv.com.

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

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

FBC West Fork seeking **part-time worship leader** - send resume and questions to westforkfbc@yahoo.com.

FBC West Fork seeking **full-time student minister**. Send resumes or questions to westforkfbc@yahoo.com.

FBC of Heber Springs is looking for a **part-time ministry assistant**. Candidate must have proven secretarial or administrative experience, excellent time management skills and ability to multi-task and prioritize work, attention to detail and problem solving skills, excellent written and verbal communication skills, strong organizational and planning skills, minimum of high school degree, proficiency in MS Office (Word, Excel, Publisher, and PowerPoint), knowledge of Adobe Creative Suite, ability to learn and manage Breeze Church Management Database System. Please email your confidential resume to fbcheber@gmail.com.

First Baptist, Mansfield, MO, is seeking **bi-vocational youth pastor** for growing youth group. Contact us at firstbaptist618@centurytel.net or 417-924-3306.

East End Baptist Church is seeking a **bi-vo-**

ational worship leader. Responsibilities will include leading music in Sunday morning and evening services and leading the choir. Contact the church at 4701 East End Road, Hensley, AR 72065 or by emailing pastor@eeb-car.com.

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 sulliglienda@yahoo.com if interested.

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

Looking to fill a staff position at your church?

Visit arkansasbaptist.org/ad to submit your classified!

Drendel to lead Greco-Roman wrestling at Williams Baptist

WALNUT RIDGE - The Williams Baptist College (WBC) athletic department announced the first Greco-Roman head coach in school history Jan. 18.

Jonathan Drendel, former NAIA National Qualifier for the WBC wrestling team, has been named to lead the newly founded program. He currently serves as a student assistant on the WBC folk-style wrestling team.

The North Aurora, Ill., native was a junior national champion, as well as univer-

sity national champion in the Greco-Roman wrestling style. He has also been named All-American multiple times.

"Coach Drendel has been with our wrestling program since its infancy. He was an outstanding student-athlete for us and has developed a great reputation as a student-assistant coach. With his background in the Greco-Roman style, he has the experience and leadership ability to succeed," said Jeff Rider, director of athletics.

As Drendel works to com-

plete a degree at Williams, Kerry Regner, the current Eagles wrestling head coach, will lead the recruiting efforts for the first-year program. Upon completion of his degree this May, Drendel will take on all responsibilities of the Greco-Roman program.

"I am excited for this great opportunity. I look forward to giving back to this school as well as the sport of wrestling. I am looking forward to accomplishing a lot with this program," said Drendel.



Jonathan Drendel (center) coaching a recent WBC wrestling match.

Williams becomes the second college in the country to participate in this specific style of wrestling. The style is more popular with athletes who aspire to compete at the Olympic level. The main difference between folk-style and Greco-Roman is that the latter restricts the wrestlers' ability

to attack below the waist or attack with legs.

"My teams will work hard, smart, and with an emphasis on the newest levels of training. We want guys to be prepared for the next level of national and international competition," said Drendel.

Drendel is the son of Kevin and Beth Drendel of North Aurora, Ill.

"I would like to thank Coach Regner; my high school coach, Mike DiNovo; Ivan Ivanov, my coach at Northern Michigan, and my parents for always pushing me to make it to the next level of my career on and off the mat," said Drendel. "My accomplishments would not be possible without their contributions."

For more information on Williams Baptist athletics visit wbceagles.com.

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Faith & Culture

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

Romans 12:2 (ESV)

Conference tackles topic, 'Why I am not an atheist'

Lisa Falknor
Special to the ABN

CONWAY - This past year American Atheists promoted a nationwide holiday billboard campaign targeting the younger generation.

The billboards featured two messages, with one including a young adult responding to a friend who texted to ask if she would be attending Christmas church services.

"LOL. No way," she texted. "I don't believe that stuff anymore."

The friend asked what if her parents disliked her attitude?

"They'll get over it," she responded.

A second American Atheists billboard is a parody of President Donald Trump's campaign slogan: "MAKE CHRISTMAS GREAT AGAIN. Skip church!"

Atheists especially desire the hearts of the "almost 40 percent of young people (who) are atheist or non-religious" revealed in a recent Public Research Institute, according to religious leaders. According to the American Atheists website, the Public Research Institute

survey inspired the holiday campaigns and, in the case of the "texting" billboard, "(The) billboard is aimed at that growing population."

"The new atheists are aggressive and evangelistic," said Robert "Bob" Stewart, professor of philosophy and theology at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and breakout session speaker at the Lead>Defend Conference, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Feb. 25, on the University of Central Arkansas campus in Conway.

The theme of the annual one-day conference, sponsored by the college and young leaders team of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC), is Cultural Collision.

"Over the last 20 years, people who don't believe in God have doubled. There are twice as many atheists," said Stewart, who also serves as Greer-Heard chair of faith and culture and as director of the Institute for Christian Apologetics at the seminary. The five-year pilot program aims to bring together Christian scholars (both evangelical and liberal) with non-evangelical scholars,



Stewart



Screen capture from atheists.org.

atheists/agnostics and non-religious people.

Stewart knows how difficult being a Christian student can be today.

"There are plenty of professors and others - especially at state universities - who are zealous in attacking the Christian faith," he said.

They describe Christians as "mean-spirited, narrow-minded bigots," Stewart said, adding that "an overwhelming population in North America believes God exists."

While Stewart feels called to defend his faith to the non-religious, he also hopes to encourage believers in apologetics, or defending their faith. He calls these "lay-level talks." Christians must "maintain convictions in the face of criticism" to counteract negative

statements and to gain "credence in a wider world," like on school campuses and in the marketplace, he said.

Stewart said by attending the apologetics session, students will gain confidence in their beliefs and be better able to give sound answers to those who oppose them. He plans to address two pressing topics confronting students.

"The first talk lays out what the new atheism is - their key beliefs," said Stewart. "I'll challenge three core assumptions and show they're false, then give a half-dozen reasons why I'm not an atheist."

The second session will include questions students encounter on both secular and Christian campuses, he said, such as "Is Jesus really the only Savior?" or "Is there really only

one way to heaven?"

Stewart said he plans to unpack the question, "What about the Muslim who is equally sincere in his faith or those on an island without any missionary presence who've never heard the name Jesus? Will God send them to hell?" He said that parallel to that question is the belief that there's no such thing as truth. "Frequently we hear, 'That's your truth, not mine,' or 'There's no such thing as objective truth.' I poke holes in these objections," he said.

For more information on the conference visit cylarkansas.com.

Lisa Falknor is a writer for the ABSC college and young leaders team and a regional correspondent for the Arkansas Baptist News.

US finds difficulty in identifying thought leaders

NASHVILLE, Tenn. - America's got problems and needs to talk. But few Americans agree on who can best lead a conversation about the nation's woes, according to a new report from Nashville-based LifeWay Research.

Only 23 percent would turn to the office of the U.S. president. About 1 in 10 would turn to the nation's preachers or to college professors.

"Almost no one would ask a musician or pro athlete ... few Americans seem to look to them as thought leaders," said Scott McConnell, executive director of LifeWay Research.

Before the recent presidential election, LifeWay Research asked a representative sample of 1,000 Americans this question: "In America today, who is

in the best position to generate a healthy conversation on challenges facing our society?" Possible responses included "our elected president," preachers and even pro athletes.

About a quarter of those surveyed said the office of the president has the best chance of fostering healthy public conversations; 11 percent said pastors of local churches; 10 percent said university professors, and members of the media (8 percent) fared slightly better than business leaders (7 percent) or members of Congress (6 percent). The most common response: "None of these" (33 percent).

Other findings:

Southerners are more likely to look to the president (25

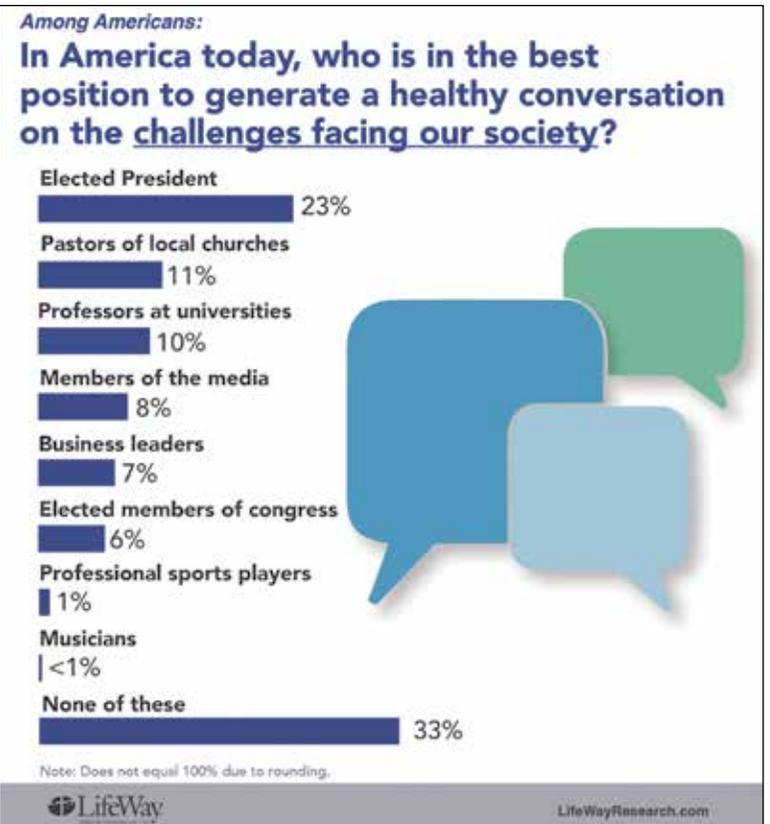
percent) than those in the Midwest (18 percent).

African-Americans are the most likely ethnic group to choose local pastors (21 percent) and the president (37 percent).

Christians are more likely to look to pastors (16 percent) than those from other faiths (1 percent) or those with no religious preference (2 percent).

Christians (7 percent) are less likely to look to professors than those from other faiths (18 percent) or Nones (15 percent).

Americans with evangelical beliefs have faith in pastors (36 percent) but little faith in the media (3 percent) or professors (3 percent) to guide such conversations.



FEBRUARY 5, 2017

Warriors are not timid. This sentiment crosses cultures and time. Whether speaking of American soldiers fighting today, the Spartans of ancient Greece or Samurai within Japanese history, there is a general consensus among humans that, to be considered a warrior, one must be strong, powerful, confident, loyal, unyielding and full of valor.

This is because a warrior is not simply a soldier. One of the dictionary.com definitions of warrior is “a person who shows or has shown great vigor, courage, or aggressiveness, as in politics or athletics.” A warrior is someone who is brave and who fights not because he must, but because he wants to. ... Right?

Well, not all of them started that way.

In Judges 6 we read that after sinning in the eyes of God, the Israelites were delivered into the hands of Midian, the leader of the Midianites, by God. Following this, Israel became a victim of the Midianites, the Amalekites and other peoples “of the East” (Judg. 6:1-

3). These peoples, especially the Midianites, overpowered Israel, eating their food, taking their livestock and destroying their land (Judg. 6:4-6).

Upon being decimated by their foes, Israel called out to the Lord. The Lord then responded by sending a prophet who reminded Israel of their disobedience and of the promises God had made to them in the past (Judg. 6:7-10).

The culmination of the story comes when God called Gideon, a timid and unlikely warrior, to save Israel.

With God’s help Gideon courageously pulled down an idol of Baal, which Israel had been worshiping, and built an altar to the Lord. This realignment of Israel’s worship was the catalyst for their

defeat of the Midianites in Judges 8.

While all warriors must be full of valor, not all of them started life as warriors. As seen in the case of Gideon, God has a special way of transforming ordinary men into incredible warriors for Him!

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Timid warrior

JUDGES 6:11-16,25-32 (ESV)

Caleb Yarbrough
Little Rock

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

Following with joy

PHILIPPIANS 2:1-11 (ESV)

Caleb Yarbrough
Little Rock

and corporately share in a Christ-centered and Christ-like mindset.

While the first half of the passage revolves around Paul explaining humility in specific terms and giving the Philippians specific commands in regards to how and how not to practice it, the second half simply describes the immense humility of Christ.

“Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death,

even death on a cross” (Phil. 2:5-8).

While many believers seek to follow Christ each day, I think we often forget that Christ gave us not only the gift of eternal life but also the keys to living fuller and more joyful lives here on earth. By following Christ and His example, we can truly live in love and humility.

FEBRUARY 12, 2017

When I was a child I remember vividly the time I touched the stove with my bare hand. I say “the” time because after doing it once I never did it again.

The perilous event happened as my mom and grandmother were in the kitchen cooking. I had been told not to touch the stove, regardless of the pretty orange and blue colors it made – because it was very hot, it would burn me and that would hurt ... a lot.

Being the inquisitive youngster I was, I took it on myself to go ahead and test the legitimacy of my mom and grandmother’s claims. I ended up in tears with a lightly seared hand.

I have had friends tell me about similar experiences in which they learned valuable lessons “the hard way” instead of listening to the wisdom of people who knew better.

It’s easy for us to understand how a naive young child may make these kind of mistakes, but in Judges 16 we read the story of how Samson’s lack of respect for God – His promises and His warn-

ings – eventually led him to squander his potential and learn some difficult lessons the hard way.

In Judges 16, Samson, a man who God blessed with incredible strength and who “with the jawbone of a donkey ... struck down a thousand men” (Judg. 15:16), was seduced by Delilah, a beautiful woman who was working for the Philistines.

The Philistines were Samson’s enemies, and they used the allure of Delilah to find out the source of his power – “the seven locks of his head” (Judg. 16:19). After receiving a reward from the Philistines, Delilah called them to shave Samson’s head and the passage says,

following this, “the Lord had left him” (Judg. 16:20).

Samson understood the origin of his strength. His hair had never been cut, as a living testament to his Lord. However, in a time of weakness, Samson gave in to temptation and chose worldly pleasures over the things of God – and paid dearly for his disobedience.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Compromised potential

JUDGES 16:4-6,13-20 (ESV)

Caleb Yarbrough
Little Rock

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

Growing with joy

PHILIPPIANS 3:12-21 (ESV)

Caleb Yarbrough
Little Rock

I started playing guitar early in high school. I had the privilege of having a dad that, while he never played any instruments, had great taste in music. From when I was too young to appreciate them, he would play me many of the great artists and bands from the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s that he grew up listening to. At

some point I decided that I wanted to learn how to play like some of my favorite guitar players.

Since I began playing the guitar I have finished school, been to multiple foreign countries, started working a real job, gone through numerous phases of life and married my beautiful wife, but through it all, I have maintained a love for the instrument.

I think part of my love for the guitar comes from my recognition of my inability to ever fully master it and the reality that, while it can make beautiful sounds when placed in capable hands, the guitar is simply a piece of wood with strings on it.

One of my favorite guitar players, Julian Lage, said it well in an interview with *Guitar Player* magazine, “I think there’s something so inherently absurd and so beautiful about playing guitar.

It isn’t a life or death thing. Things are risky and dangerous in real life, but within a musical context ... you can try things,

and even if they don’t work it is exhilarating!”

In many ways, my experience with the guitar mirrors that of my experience with Jesus. I became a follower of Christ as a child and have maintained a relationship with Him for nearly two decades now.

While I recognize my sinfulness and com-

plete inability to earn righteousness, I also recognize that Christ has the capable hands necessary to transform my “lowly body to be like his glorious body” (Phil. 3:21).

As believers, each day is an opportunity to become more like Christ. He is our example, and through His grace we can live in joy and assurance.

Talk radio provides outlet for Christian worldview

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP) – Just a few days after getting out of an airplane seat on a long-haul flight back from Egypt, a Baptist pastor found himself sitting in a different cozy seat across the table from radio host Greg Davis.

Some might call it the hot seat, that little leather chair in the radio studio of WXJC in Birmingham, Ala. But the way Davis sees it, it's just a good place for a friendly discussion. On the day Davis talked with pastor Paul Brasher, the two spoke about the persecuted church in Egypt. Brasher shared about his opportunity to visit with a growing church that met in a garbage dump.

"The church over there, it's vibrant, it's growing," said Brasher, pastor of New Hope Baptist Church, Pell City.

That's encouraging, Davis said. And that's exactly the kind of thing the radio host wants listeners of his talk show, Priority Talk, to get to hear about.

Davis, who also leads a student ministry called First Priority of Alabama, sits at that table five days a week and talks with pastors, authors, actors, musicians and many others.

And he invites anyone who is interested to listen in.

Desirable landing spot

"We try to bring the biblical or Christian worldview to whatever we talk about, no matter what kind of issue or topic it is," he said.

That plus the fact that it's a strong, 50,000-watt signal on FM radio makes his talk show a desirable landing spot for guests – some of whom are household names in many Christian homes – to be on the air, Davis said.

From Kirk Cameron to Squire Parsons, Mac Powell to James Dobson and pretty much every Southern Baptist Convention president from the past several years, Davis said he enjoys the variety of people he gets to talk to.

He also loves to feature Alabama pastors like Brasher.

"We've got a national reach and nationally known names in here pretty often, but we are also definitely local. That sets us apart," Davis said. "If you're looking to hear about what's going on in the world from a different perspective than anywhere else, you'd enjoy listening to our program."

Davis, a member of Beechwood Baptist Church, Mount Olive, first had the idea for the program more than five years ago when he was a regular guest on several of Crawford Broadcasting's stations.

"I went on there a lot at the time to promote First Priority, and I got to thinking that I was sad that there wasn't a place for authors, pastors and others to talk about ministry," Davis said.

He mentioned that to them a few times.

Then one day, they decided he had a good point.

"The general manager was in town and they set me up to meet with her," he said. "She said, 'Hey, we're going to do that show, and we want you to host it.'"

Davis wasn't too sure about that at first. But he agreed to get together with some of his buddies and do it for a little while and see how it went.

"I thought it would be fun to do for a few months," he said. "I could've never fathomed that more than five years later, we'd still be doing it."

It's been an amazing experience, he said.



Greg Davis, host of Priority Talk Radio, said he "could've never fathomed" that the idea he had for a talk radio show about ministry would become an almost daily experience he's had for the past five years. Photo by Neisha Roberts

"I get to sit down and have conversations with people and ask any question I want to ask," he said. "It's been really valuable for me personally, not just a fun job. We don't think there's any reason to waste our time talking about it unless it's got something to help with building the Kingdom."

And Priority Talk is a live radio show that takes phone calls, so Davis never knows exactly where a conversation will go, he said.

"But where most talk radio is driven by controversy, ours

isn't that way," Davis said.

"We talk about hard issues," he noted, "but we also have fun while we do it."

Daily shows

Priority Talk airs weekdays from 2-4 p.m. and Saturdays from 5-7 p.m. on 92.5 FM or 850 AM in the Birmingham area (or you can listen live online from anywhere) and Sundays from 9-11 a.m. on WYDE (101.1 FM).

It also is available in podcast form on iTunes or on the show's website.

Abortion funding ban passes House, goes to Senate

WASHINGTON (BP) – The U.S. House of Representatives took the first step Jan. 24 toward a permanent, government-wide ban on federal funds for abortions.

The House voted 238-183 for the No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion and Abortion Insurance Full Disclosure Act (H.R. 7). If it becomes law, the proposal would standardize prohibitions that now exist in various U.S. programs, in addition to blocking federal money for abortion coverage under the 2010 health care law and guaranteeing full disclosure of abortion funding by health insurance plans that are part of the controversial arrangement.

The Hyde Amendment – which bars Medicaid funding of abortion and became the general label for such bans on health programs – has saved the lives of more than 2 million unborn babies, the pro-life Charlotte Lozier Institute

estimated on the law's 40th anniversary in September.

The new legislation must still gain approval in the Senate, which failed to act on the ban in the last session after the House passed it. New President Donald Trump has pledged his support for a permanent prohibition on federal abortion funding.

Supporters of such a ban rejoiced at the action, while opponents – such as Planned Parenthood and NARAL Pro-choice America – decried it.

Southern Baptist ethicist Russell Moore expressed his gratitude to the House and its speaker, Rep. Paul Ryan of Wisconsin.

"The Hyde Amendment represents a bipartisan consensus that taxpayers should not have to violate their consciences through subsidized abortion," said Moore, president of the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC). "Codifying this consensus through

the No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act is the right decision for the unborn, families and communities.

"Along with Baptists and other believers around the country, I urge the Senate to take up their form of this bill and get it to the president's desk," said Moore.

Carol Tobias, president of the National Right to Life Committee, said in a written release, "Over two million Americans are alive today because of the Hyde Amendment. With today's vote, we are one step closer to getting the federal government out of the business of paying for abortion once and for all."

NARAL President Ilyse Hogue slammed the legislation as "anti-choice overreach – mistaking an electoral win for a mandate."

"This is classic obsessive behavior by Congressional Republicans, who prioritize these draconian measures in

a country hungry for genuine economic progress and committed to expanding personal freedom," she said in a written statement.

Congress approved the Hyde Amendment initially in 1976, three years after the Supreme Court legalized abortion throughout the country. Legislators, however, have had to pass it and similar bans in other federal health programs each year as part of spending measures. The measure is named after its sponsor, the late Republican Rep. Henry Hyde of Illinois.

Bipartisan support for prohibiting federal funding of abortion has declined dramatically through the years as the number of pro-life Democrats in Congress has fallen. In the latest roll call, no Republicans opposed H.R. 7, while only three Democrats supported it. The sole Democrats to vote for the ban were Reps. Henry Cuellar of Texas, Dan Lipinski

of Illinois and Collin Peterson of Minnesota.

During the debate that preceded the roll-call vote, Rep. Trent Franks, R-Ariz., a Southern Baptist, said it is certain someday "we as a society will look back and we will recognize the humanity of these little children of God and the inhumanity of what was being done to them. And we will regret these days. Until then, at least, can't we get together and say that we shouldn't force taxpayers to pay for the killing of innocent, little, human beings. I pray that we can open our eyes to that truth."

A Marist Poll released Jan. 23 reported 61 percent of Americans oppose or strongly oppose taxpayer funding of abortion, including 40 percent of pro-choice citizens and 41 percent of Democrats. The Roman Catholic Knights of Columbus sponsored the survey.

Arkansas Baptist News

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WILLIAMS 75 YEARS 1941 - 2016

Williams Baptist College: The dream

Eight Coefficients
Williams Baptist College

WALNUT RIDGE - Logically, it never should have worked. The country was still cleaving its way back from the Great Depression. The region had seen one Baptist school after another close its doors. Yet, a young pastor, all of 28 years old, had a dream.

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

Indeed, the starting college that now bears the

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

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

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

Looking back over Williams' legacy of other Baptist school-building: Maywood Academy, W. Mountain Home Baptist College, Baptist College.

"He felt led, despite the hard efforts, to try, yet again, and Christian higher education of good. He was fortunate in his encouragement of alumni at previous Baptist schools," an academic dean and biographer says.

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

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

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

Among the many other events during the day, the Lady Eagles volleyball squad faced St. Louis College of Pharmacy, and the Eagles basketball squad faced Hendrix College. During the game's halftimes, the softball and soccer teams were recognized for their accomplishments in the 2015-16 season.

Also, Alexis Clardy of Conway, and Ryan Whitte of Oriskany, Conn., were crowned the WBC 2016 homecoming queen and king.

Clardy is a senior, double-

Trump elected; Ark. voters approve 'medical marijuana'

Arkansas approves marijuana
In Arkansas, voters approved the Arkansas Medical Marijuana Amendment, making the use of medical marijuana legal for some Arkansians.

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

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

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

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

Ark. churches among fastest growing

Way Christian Resources.

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

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

In the self-reported survey, LifeWay Research surveys 27,000 churches for information, calculates the trends and compiles the lists. In turn, Church and writes features profiling churches and leaders.

See **GB01W6** page 7

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