

Blackaby undergoes surgery

ATLANTA – Southern Baptist Bible teacher Henry Blackaby underwent successful bypass surgery Sept. 24, after suffering a heart attack while driving in Atlanta, becoming confused and traveling for 29 hours before police found him Sept. 20 in Tifton, Ga., 150 miles southeast of his home.

“Henry Blackaby is out of surgery this morning. The surgeon indicated the quadruple bypass surgery could not have gone better. Henry has been living with blocked or 70 percent blocked arteries for several years,” a statement posted on the Blackaby Ministries International website said.

“The doctor claims he will feel much better once his recovery is complete. Please pray for his recovery and that there will be no complications,” the statement continued. “The family cannot thank you enough for your prayers and kind wishes. We believe God has some special tasks remaining for Henry



Blackaby

See **BLACKABY** page 3



82 baptized at Mount Carmel revival

David Mitchell (foreground), pastor of Mount Carmel Baptist Church, Cabot, and Joshua Adair, Mount Carmel student pastor, baptize believers in horse troughs during the last night of a revival held Sept. 15-18 at the church. Eighty-two people were baptized during the service. Read story on Page 2.

Photo by Caleb Yarbrough

Schools OK to arm staff

Caleb Yarbrough
Arkansas Baptist News

IN LIGHT of recent shootings across the U.S., some Arkansas schools have armed teachers and staff members in an attempt to protect students.

The Clarksville School District recently created an “armed emergency response team” after the Arkansas Board of Private Investigators and Private Security Agents agreed to maintain commissions for armed

See **GUNS** page 3

Delta Connection teaches theology

HELENA-WEST HELENA – While it is important for ministers of the gospel to have a strong foundation in biblical theology, necessary educational resources are oftentimes scarce. The Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC) is helping respond to needs for theological education in Helen-West Helena through the program Delta Connection.

Willie Jacobs and Tim Wicker, members of the ABSC’s missions ministries team, are partnering with Joe Garner, associational missionary for the Arkansas Valley Baptist

See **DELTA** page 2

OUR CHURCHES

Relationships focus of FBC, Marmaduke

Caleb Yarbrough
Arkansas Baptist News

MARMADUKE – In a town of less than 1,200 in rural northeast Arkansas, First Baptist Church, Marmaduke, recently had nearly 350 in attendance during a Sunday morning worship service. And while numbers don’t tell the whole story, Kim Bridges, First Baptist’s pastor, believes the most fundamental aspect of growing a church and reaching people is building relationships and investing in a community.

“You have to make it more than Sunday. ... Yesterday, for example, a bunch of farmers got together

and had a fish fry. They said, ‘Come on out preacher. We’re going to eat fish.’ And you build relationships like that over a plate of catfish,” said Bridges.

“I think the key is keeping the mindset that, ‘I need to be there for others and help others.’ ... It works because when you invest in other people, they will invest back in you,” the pastor said.

In a day when much of the Southern Baptist Convention’s (SBC) focus is set on reaching cities and highly populated areas – small towns and rural areas are often neglected.



Bridges

For Bridges, regardless of location, everybody is important and everyone needs to hear the gospel at least once. The pastor said that Christ went where the needs were, and believers should do the same thing.

“We can’t help everybody, but we can help somebody. We can’t make a difference in everybody, but we can make a difference in some. ... Jesus is more than we bargain for; I don’t care how good you are or think you are, He is more. And that’s what people are looking for – the real thing,” he said.

“Whether it’s a rural area or an

urban area, I think that just depends on God’s call on your life. And this is God’s call on my life,” said Bridges.

Marmaduke native

Bridges is a native of Marmaduke, grew up in First Baptist and, after accepting Christ at 13, he preached his first sermon at the church in the early 1970s. After serving at other churches in Arkansas and Florida, he returned home in 1994 as pastor of his home church.

First Baptist has made missions and outreach the heart of their

See **FBC** page 2

82 baptized at Mount Carmel revival Sept. 18

Caleb Yarbrough
Arkansas Baptist News

CABOT - Mount Carmel Baptist Church, Cabot, is no cowboy church, but that didn't stop them from bringing in horse troughs to baptize 82 believers at the close of a recent communitywide revival.

Ronnie Hill of Ronnie Hill Ministries of Fort Worth, Texas, led the revival, which was held Sept. 15-18 at Mount Carmel Baptist. Hill spoke at multiple Cabot public schools during the week as well.

"We began our revival services on Sunday morning (Sept. 15) as Dr. Hill challenged our Mount Carmel family on two things: Make sure you didn't 'pass over' the spiritual first base of salvation, and make sure you are using your salvation experience to share Christ with others," said Dale McGregor, executive pastor

at Mount Carmel.

On the evening of Sept. 15, Josh Adair, Mount Carmel's student pastor, challenged the church's seventh through 12th grade youth through a service titled "Bring Them Back Alive." A nacho party immediately followed the service, which was packed with students and saw 15 young people make decisions for Christ.

Speaking at assemblies at multiple Cabot public schools, Hill invited students in the first through sixth grades and their families to visit the church for pizza, a drawing for a trip to Walt Disney World for a family of four and a revival service. On Monday, Sept. 16, the church fed more than 600 people and had more than 750 in the evening's service, through which 38 people made decisions for Christ.

"A sixth-grader named Major

Hart held the winning ticket after the drawing, and he and his family will be experiencing Walt Disney World during spring break 2014," said McGregor.

"More importantly, Major Hart had accepted Jesus as his Savior just 30 minutes prior to winning the trip," the pastor said.

On Tuesday, Sept. 17, Hill spoke to more than 3,000 students at Cabot High School, Cabot Junior High North and Cabot Junior High South and again invited the students and their friends and families to visit Mount Carmel. On the evening of Sept. 17, Mount Carmel fed more than 800 seventh through 12th grade students. Following the meal, Hill presented the plan of salvation to 822 students and adults, 64 of whom made decisions for Christ.

After the service, Hill had a drawing for a 2004 Ford Mustang, which

was provided by a member of the church. Ethan Hanle, a seventh-grader, won the car.

The culmination of Mount Carmel Baptist's revival was a steak dinner and final service held Wednesday, Sept. 18.

Throughout the week, Hill and Mount Carmel's leadership had been challenging the congregation to invite their friends and families to attend.

In all, 758 steak dinners were served, and many of those in attendance stayed for the service that followed.

During the final service, Hill preached on believer's baptism, and the service culminated in 82 believers of all ages being baptized in three horse troughs placed at the front of the church's sanctuary.

Contact Caleb Yarbrough at caleb@arkansasbaptist.org.

DELTA

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Association, and numerous Arkansas Baptist pastors to provide sound biblical training through a series of classes.

On Sept. 10, an informational session for Delta Connection was held at Dee's Barbecue and Fish in Lexa. Men from throughout Phillips and surrounding Arkansas Delta counties fellowshiped over barbecue and heard a short message from J.D. "Sonny" Tucker, ABSC

executive director.

Delta Connection classes are held on Tuesdays between Sept. 17 and Nov. 12 at Phillips Community College of the University of Arkansas in Helena-West Helena.

Twenty-two men were in attendance at the first class Sept. 17. John McCallum, pastor of First Baptist Church, Hot Springs, was the guest lecturer. Mark Dance of Second Baptist Church, Conway, was the guest lecturer Sept. 24.

Future guest lecturers are Greg Addison, pastor First Baptist Church, Cabot, and president of

the Arkansas Baptist State Convention; Todd Marino, pastor of First Baptist Church, Marianna; Jeff Williams, pastor of Geyer Springs First Baptist Church, Little Rock; Craig Collier, pastor of Mount Pisgah Baptist Church, Jacksonville; Rick Grant, pastor of First Baptist Church, Benton, and Robby Tingle, team leader of the ABSC missions ministry team.

Currently, Delta Connection consists of one course on systematic theology, but others are planned. Jacobs said the convention is in the process of seeking accreditation for

the course - and all future courses - so that students may count their work toward degrees at colleges and seminaries.

Delta Connection is made possible by the ABSC through gifts to the Dixie Jackson Arkansas Missions Offering and is part of an ongoing state convention strategy to reach the Arkansas Delta, one of the poorest and least evangelized portions of the state.

For more information about Delta Connection, contact Jacobs at wjacobs@absc.org or Wicker at twicker@absc.org.

FBC

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ministry. Bridges emphasized the church's goal is not only to tell people about Jesus, but to show them His power through relationship-building and service.

"I tell our folks, 'Live that commission,'" said Bridges, "Go into all the world, and the world may be your neighbor next door or it may be a man in Kenya."

This past summer First Baptist took four mission trips. Seventeen people went to Alaska, five went to Uganda, one went to Guatemala and three went to Kenya.

Recently, the church voted to do an "extreme home makeover" for a member of their congregation. After moving the family into the church's unoccupied parsonage, church members began work building the family a new home. The project is the church's "Mission Mar-

maduke" for the fall.

"We take Acts 1:8 very seriously, and it has become a theme of ours," said Bridges.

Ministries

About a year ago, First Baptist started Road to the Cross Cowboy Church. The church meets every two weeks in a storefront in downtown Marmaduke and has regularly been running 100-plus in attendance on the first and third Thursdays of each month. Bridges and Kevin Murray, pastor of Emmanuel Baptist Church, Piggott, share preaching duties, and

c o u n t r y and western style worship music is led by members of First Baptist and other Marmaduke churches.

Bridges said the

main hub of the Marmaduke community is the local school district. As a ministry to their local community, First Baptist joined with four other churches within the district and started a food bank called Good

Samaritan Outreach. Together, churches bought a building in downtown Marmaduke and cooperate to supply and run the ministry. According to Bridges, Good Samaritan feeds between 400 and 600 people each month.

"We try to do everything we can locally," he said.

Each November First Baptist participates in Marmaduke's community Thanksgiving dinner.

"We go to the school on the Sunday night before Thanksgiving, and people come together and put their differences aside. One of the local pastors preaches, the school choir sings and then we take up an offering for Good Samaritan," Bridges said.

Like many churches, First Baptist holds a yearly vacation Bible school (VBS) for children in their community. However, unlike other churches, for more than 30 years, they have also hosted an event for local teenagers called Teen College, in which teenagers come each evening for a

week and participate in activities - much like a VBS for teens.

"I am a product of Teen College.

... It was started when I was a teenager, 13 or 14 years old, and it is still going today," said Bridges.

"Paul said in the Scripture, 'I need to be all things to all men.' I think that is something we need to realize. ... Henry Blackaby says in 'Experiencing God,' 'Find what God is doing and join.' I think that is the key," said the pastor.

First Baptist recently celebrated its 125th anniversary in July. In

the church's anniversary booklet, Bridges sums up the mission of the church through the years and until Christ returns.

"That is what we do - serve - just like our Master, for He came to seek and save, He came to serve, wash feet, He came to do whatever was needed! Thank you for being servants, thank you for the last 125 years of ministry," he wrote.

Contact Caleb Yarbrough at caleb@arkansasbaptist.org.



OBU approves 4% tuition increase

Trennis Henderson

Ouachita Baptist University

ARKADELPHIA – Helping prospective students and their families make plans for fall 2014 enrollment, Ouachita Baptist University's board of trustees voted Sept. 12 to set tuition rates for the 2014-15 academic year.

The new rates include \$11,400 per semester for tuition plus \$260 for activity and tech fees and \$3,450 for room and board for a total cost of \$15,110 per semester, an increase of about 4 percent from the current rates.

With more than 95 percent of Ouachita students receiving scholarships and other financial aid to significantly reduce costs, the announced rates allow students to begin exploring financial

assistance opportunities.

Based on a study of peer institutions from Arkansas and surrounding states, Ouachita's per-semester cost ranks 14th among the 18 colleges and universities surveyed. Brett Powell, vice president for administrative services, told board members that a primary goal in budgeting for tuition costs each year is to "stay at an affordable rate compared to our peer institutions."

In other business, Ouachita President Rex Horne updated trustees, revealing plans to study the possibility of launching online degree programs as well as a possible off-campus partnership leading to an associate's degree. He has appointed study committees to explore those options and will report the findings at a future board meeting.

Horne also announced plans to

move into phase two of the university's Defining the Difference campaign. The capital campaign, which was launched in conjunction with Ouachita's 125th anniversary in 2011, has generated more than \$8.3 million in gifts and pledges, in addition to undesignated annual gifts. He said phase two will focus on funding specific priority goals.

He also reported that progress is being made on fundraising for the construction of a new facility for the Ben M. Elrod Center for Family & Community.

The Elrod Center has been awarded a \$210,000 challenge grant from the J.E. and L.E. Mabee Foundation to help the center reach its fundraising goal of \$1.05 million.

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

BLACKABY

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to do and we know he will be eager to undertake them as soon as he is better!"

Blackaby's disappearance Sept. 19 was attributed to disorientation due to health problems.

"He did not have his cell phone with him nor insulin for his diabetes," a statement said at the time Blackaby was located. "As a result, his blood sugar rose and his kidneys began to struggle as well. The family was able to track his move-

ments as he used a credit card to make occasional purchases. The police assigned a detective group to monitor his movements and to track him down. Hundreds of volunteers, many from his church at First Baptist Church Jonesboro, Ga., drove all over the city looking for him."

During the hours of his disappearance, prayers for Blackaby were circulated by various Southern Baptist leaders and over the PrayerLink network of Baptist workers who lead intercessory prayer initiatives. And a report of his disappearance has been on local TV in the Atlanta area.

Blackaby is best known for the "Experiencing God" Bible study he

coauthored with Claude King. The discipleship resource, first published in 1990, has sold more than 7 million copies in 45 languages.

Blackaby is the announced leader of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention prayer leader's workshop set for Jan. 27 at First Baptist Church, Sherwood. The workshop will be held immediately prior to the annual State Conference on Evangelism and Church Growth Jan. 27-28. No announcement has been made regarding Blackaby's appearance at the prayer conference.

Compiled from reporting by Baptist Press and the *Arkansas Baptist News*.

GUNS

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security personnel who are employed by school districts, according to *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*.

While Arkansas law does not generally allow teachers to carry guns in public schools, it does allow trained security guards to do so. Therefore, all Clarksville School District employees who carry concealed firearms must be recognized as commissioned security guards by the state.

The school district's emergency response team is made up of 14 employees, spread out over each of the district's five campuses. Each member of the team was issued a 9mm handgun, which they conceal carry, the *Democrat-Gazette* reported.

Public schools are not alone in moving to arm their staff. Recently, a new state law was passed giving Arkansas' private schools the option to have teachers and other school employees carry firearms on campus.

Arkansas Christian Academy in Bryant received national attention after they posted signs on their campus, which read, "Staff is armed and trained. Any attempt to harm children will be met with deadly force,"

according to media reports.

"I just felt like with what's going on in many of the public sectors where there seems to be a lot of shootings, we need to take the same stance that we do in church on Sunday for our kids Monday through Friday," Perry Black, pastor of Family Church, Bryant, and Arkansas Christian Academy administrator, told KARK-TV.

"We reserve our right as American citizens and as Christians to protect the children on our campus," Black told the TV station.

The Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting in Newtown, Conn., in December 2012 was one of the deadliest school attacks in the country's history and prompted many questions regarding the security of America's schools and discussions on how to avoid such tragedies in the future.

Justin Moseley, superintendent for Abundant Life School in Sherwood, said that even before the attack on Sandy Hook, Abundant Life had plans in motion to improve the security of the school. The school is affiliated with Sylvan Hills First Baptist Church in Sherwood.

"Even before the tragedy, ... plans were in the works to relocate our office to a location that would more

easily limit access to students by an intruder," Moseley told the *Arkansas Baptist News* (ABN).

"Extra interior doors have been added that can only be unlocked by the office staff."

However, Moseley said, Abundant Life will not be arming their faculty or staff.

"We have yet to consider arming our staff, but have taken many extra precautions to keep our students safe while on and off campus," he said.

Events like the Sandy Hook school shooting leave some to wonder if arming teachers or staff is the best defense in preventing such tragedies in the future.

Steve Siebold, an online contributor to *The Huffington Post*, mentioned Arkansas Christian Academy specifically in an editorial titled "Every Teacher in America Should Have a Gun," arguing that every school in America should follow suit.

"In a perfect world we wouldn't need to take such measures," Siebold writes.

"A school should be a safe haven where children can learn and grow. And right now, arming teachers is the only practical solution."

Contact Caleb Yarbrough at caleb@arkansasbaptist.org.

ABN Digest

Stories of interest to Arkansas Baptists

81 killed in attack on Pakistan church

PESHAWAR, Pakistan (BP) – It was easy to spot a Christian in Pakistan on Sept. 23. Normally, they tend to keep a low profile for fear of persecution. But this day, they wore black bands around their arms as a sign of mourning and solidarity following a church bombing. The Christian community declared three days of mourning after what is regarded as the deadliest attack on a minority religion in Pakistan to date, with 81 people killed and more than 130 injured. The attack occurred at the historic All Saints Church in the northwestern city of Peshawar.

NAMB task force studies decline in SBC baptisms

NASHVILLE (BP) – The North American Mission Board has convened a national Pastors' Task Force on Evangelistic Impact & Declining Baptisms to address the continued decrease in baptisms among Southern Baptist churches. The group's first meeting was Sept. 18 in Nashville. The 2012 Annual Church Profile reported a drop of 5.52 percent in the number of baptisms in Southern Baptist churches, confirming a two-decade downward trend. The most recent accounting marked the first time since 1948 that baptisms dropped below 315,000.

BGCT board approves \$2 mil budget decrease

DALLAS – The Baptist General Convention of Texas (BGCT) Executive Board approved a slightly decreased budget for 2014 after three years in which total budget requirements remained essentially unchanged, reported the *Baptist Standard*. The BGCT held its annual meeting – traditionally scheduled in the fall – in July in conjunction with the Hispanic Baptist Convention of Texas and the African-American Fellowship of Texas as part of the Texas Baptist Family Gathering in San Antonio. The 2014 BGCT budget depends on \$33.85 million in Cooperative Program receipts from churches, along with \$2.29 million in investment income and an additional \$1 million from non-church donors, an overall \$2.3 million reduction.

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

'In every way proclaim Christ'

I have never been one to get too hung up on methodology when it comes to reaching people for Jesus Christ.

God has gifted each of us with certain abilities and interests, and I believe it is our responsibility to make the most of them while here on earth to further His kingdom for His glory.

There was a time when the use of mission-action was questioned as being an unbiblical way to share the love of Jesus with the lost.

It seems ridiculous today that some Southern Baptists thought that way, considering the fact the denomination mobilizes perhaps more people for disaster relief, domestic and foreign missions and other mission-action activities than any other denomination – reaching literally hundreds of thousands for Jesus every year.

Today there are those who criticize “affinity-based” ministries for catering to “worldly” desires of man and not being true to the gospel.

Aren't all churches – at least to

some extent – affinity-based?

For example, while it certainly shouldn't be this way, most churches are made up of members who share the same ethnic and socioeconomic traits.

I know of many rural, country churches that reach people for Jesus because the majority of the membership are farmers or others who make their living around the agrarian vocation.

Conversely, I know of churches in a city setting that have been successful in spreading the gospel

PRESSING ON

Tim Yarbrough
Phil. 3:14

whose members are majority white-collar business professionals.

And there are certainly other churches we all know of that are a combination of both and all types in between.

Recently, Arkansas and other states have seen a rise in popularity of cowboy and “Western culture” churches. Readers have shared with the *Arkansas Baptist News*, and accounts from the field confirm, many people come to know Jesus in these environments.



Writing from prison, the Apostle Paul advised the Church in Philipians 1:15-18 (NASB): “Some, to be sure, are preaching Christ even from envy and strife, but some also from good will; the latter do it out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel; the former proclaim Christ out of

selfish ambition rather than from pure motives, thinking to cause me distress in my imprisonment. What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and in this I rejoice.”

Tim Yarbrough is editor of the *Arkansas Baptist News*.

'Misreading Scripture with Western Eyes'

E. Randolph Richards and Brandon J. O'Brien, IVP Books, 2012

A lifetime ago, when tests were taken with No. 2 pencils and without calculators, the preparation for a multiple choice test included this advice: If you run short on time, go ahead and guess. Your guess has a chance of being right, and anything left blank is wrong.

So, dutifully, many of us readily bubbled ovals in a line when the time limit was nearly up.

I doubt that any one of us ever considered that guessing correctly would be dishonorable. After all, the goal is to get as many of the questions right as possible, is it not? The introduction to “Misreading Scripture with Western

Eyes” recounts a story of the author's time in Indonesia where his students rocked this simple assumption: Guessing correctly? That's lying to the professor about what you know.

BOOK REVIEW

Doug Hibbard
First Baptist Church, Almyra

This opening story sets up “Misreading Scripture” quite well. Throughout this work, E.

Randolph Richards and Brandon J. O'Brien present Scriptural passages that we tend to read in one manner due to the light of our shared cultural experiences. They then present other possibilities for those passages. For example, we often picture a Nativity scene with Joseph, Mary, baby Jesus and some animals.

Would this have truly been the case? “Misreading Scripture with Western Eyes” gives us another view: a hectic stable with aunts and cousins, all working through the cultural routines of childbirth.

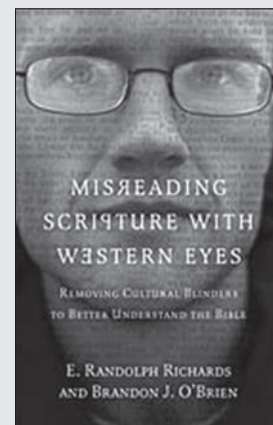
Throughout “Misreading Scripture with Western Eyes,” the authors are clear that they are highlighting the cultural blind spots of what we call the West, which are places such as the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada, as well as the Bible teaching that we have exported around the world. They are clear that any culture is likely to misread Scripture, but acknowledge that as a pair of white men in

America, they are most qualified to discuss their own weaknesses.

I found the text of “Misreading Scripture with Western Eyes” easy to read, and many places are now highlighted in my copy. The next time I preach on Peter's admonitions of modesty, I will consult what Richards and O'Brien point out regarding economic modesty, as well as consider the latest skin-baring fashions. This is a helpful

resource for learning and reference for the Bible-driven teacher and preacher.

Doug Hibbard is pastor of First Baptist Church, Almyra



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Family Matters

Together

The date was Aug. 31, 1963. It was a hot, humid day in Texas when high school sweethearts David Christian and Kay Field tied the knot. My in-laws, David and Kay Christian, celebrated 50 years of marriage together Aug. 31. It was great to celebrate with a couple who learn from their past and smile in the present of a long-term marriage together.



Phillips

In the Old Testament, God utilized husband and wife to illustrate His relationship with Israel. In the New Testament, God used the same analogy of husband and wife to illustrate the relationship between Christ and the Church (Eph. 5:22-33). Scripture consistently reveals truths about marriage between a man and a woman and the relationship God desires with His people.

The Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC) family ministry team (FMT) has trained 508 church staff to become Prepare-Enrich marriage enrichment facilitators, a program which provides relationship assessment of premarital or married couples, equipping the pastor to help couples grow together.

The team's Galatians 6:6 Retreat encourages ministry couples to nurture healthy relationships together through a two-day marriage conference. Five hundred fifty-two couples have participated in those retreats.

The ABSC was founded in Tulip, Ark., in 1848. One hundred sixty-five years later the convention still enables churches to partner together for kingdom impact in Arkansas and around the world. A tag line I frequently share is that "healthy relationships produce healthy homes, which produce healthy churches." Relationships are essential in church and denominational life. Currently, 1,511 ABSC churches and missions cooperate together.

The impact the ABSC and the FMT have had on individuals, couples, families and churches was not done alone. Together through your support of the Cooperative Program, you enable us to impact others.

Thanks for your committed relationship and for building healthy, committed marriages.

Ben Phillips leads the Arkansas Baptist State Convention family ministry team.

Expecting the miraculous

You feel it in the air. There is a tremendous sense of expectancy. You know something big is coming. It is going to be great. I am not speaking about the fall, football season or hunting season – as great as these things are. The event to which I refer is the Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC) Acts 1:8 One Day Mission Trip in Harrison and the surrounding area, taking place the weekend of Oct. 5.

Right now it looks like at least 2,300 Arkansas Baptist volunteers and missionaries will be there! There will be 14 different types of ministry going on at more than 200 sites in the Harrison area.

There will be everything from block parties, children's activities, a children's fishing derby, multiple types of evangelistic teams, health and dental clinics, home repair work, yard work – just to name a few.

We are still rejoicing over the ABSC Acts 1:8 One



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Sonny Tucker

Day Mission Trip in Forrest City last year, where more than 2,000 Arkansas Baptists from 123 churches ministered at 120 mission sites. The impact stories from that trip have been absolutely heart-moving. There were at least 150 professions of faith associated with this event in 2012.

We know that God plans to use this trip in the Harrison area to touch many, many lives. This will be a weekend of connections, good news shared, acts of love in Jesus name, divine appointments and many people placing their faith in Christ as Savior.

Thank you, First Baptist Church, Harrison, for being the meeting site, and North Arkansas Baptist Association for your tremendous work. Many lives are about to be impacted for eternity. Thank you, Arkansas Baptists, for your tremendous heart for missions!

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

Working together

Henry Ford once said, "Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success."

Ford harnessed the power of individuals working together in the business world like no one before him. By dividing labor into tasks that maximized the skill set of each employee, the group working together accomplished much more than they had in the past! Similarly, the Cooperative Program was designed to help individuals and churches partner together to do more together than they ever could alone.

One of the results of this partnership was the formation of the Arkansas Baptist Foundation in 1949 to "secure and invest trust funds for the best interests of all concerned ... and to earn the largest amount of interest in keeping with sound business."

The Foundation is able to provide investment expertise, legal advice and support to the churches and agencies of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention. Even the largest church in Arkansas would not have the means or the need to hire a full-time investment advisor, certified public accountant and attorney;

however, every Baptist church – even the smallest one – has access to those types of professionals through the Foundation. Each day we work hard to do our small part to help Arkansas Baptists make the most kingdom impact with the resources they have been given. Since 1949 (through 2012), the Foundation has received \$9,084,341 in Cooperative Program support, earned \$123,800,297 in income and distributed \$264,037,451 to various ministries and individuals. We are honored to work together with others to advance the kingdom of God.

And the Foundation is just one of many such ministries supported by the Cooperative Program. The International Mission Board, North American Mission Board, Southern Baptist seminaries, Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, Ouachita Baptist University, Williams Baptist College, Arkansas Baptist Assembly (now Camp Siloam), Arkansas Baptist Children's Homes and Family Ministries, *Arkansas Baptist News*, church planters, disaster relief teams and a whole lot of other folks would echo this sentiment. We do more when we work together!

Tim Dockery is general counsel of the Arkansas Baptist Foundation.



FINANCIAL TIMES

Tim Dockery

When preachers get together

I just had a lunch meeting with 25 ministers from Central Arkansas. First, I must say that the bacon cheeseburger was more like a meat loaf on a bun. Wow! Each was served with a knife stuck through the top. Most places just use a toothpick, but a toothpick would have been an insult to this burger. So, thanks to the chef at Markham Street Baptist Church, Little Rock, for a wonderful meal. Oh, and we had a BIG cookie and chocolate shake for dessert. What's that? You think you hear God calling you into ministry?

I sat at a table with pastors and staff from several other churches. Some were a little bigger than the church where I pastor. Some were much bigger. A pleasant aspect of this fellowship of ministers is that everyone feels like they belong in the group. Nobody (who shows up) looks down on guys from other churches. If there is a spirit of competition, it's hard to see it here. There's something about a huge burger that levels the ground where we all stand.



VIEWPOINT

Bob Loyd

Actually, it's not the burger – as excellent as it was. The Spirit of God has created a lovely spirit of fellowship and unity here. Everyone is valued. Everyone is respected. We have a common goal of reaching central Arkansas for Jesus. Even here in the Bible Belt, we have a gospel-deficiency. We all serve in churches where the Christians are on a journey of spiritual maturity. And these churches are in the midst of communities that have become less and less Christian.

Jesus once looked out over a Samaritan village and said the harvest was plentiful. Another time Jesus said to ask the Lord of the harvest to send workers into the fields. We live in an area where the harvest is plentiful and the workers must join together in the power and direction of the Holy Spirit if they hope to make much of an impact. That seems to be the desire of the men who gathered for burgers today.

Bob Loyd is pastor of Cross Road Baptist Church in Little Rock.

O'Kelley serves 12 years as Parkview interim

BOONEVILLE – Andy O'Kelley, 83, retired as interim pastor of Parkview Baptist Church, Booneville, effective July 1, as a result of poor health.

What makes his situation unique is that he served as the church's interim – "interim" generally referring to a period of time lasting from a few months to a few years between one pastor leaving and another being called – for 12 years.

O'Kelley had already retired to Van Buren by the time Parkview Baptist asked him to be interim. He had spent 16 years serving churches in Arkansas and 27 years serving churches in Oklahoma. And after returning to Arkansas, he served as interim at Northside Baptist Church, Charleston.

Bobby Scarrow, deacon at Parkview Baptist, explained that O'Kelley – affectionately nicknamed "Preach" – began serving as Parkview's interim in 2001. And he stayed.

"He came to Parkview in 2001 as interim pastor and was so loved by the people that he stayed for 12 years," said Scarrow, adding that O'Kelley said he never intended to stay that long, but it just seemed to be God's will since the church didn't

call a pastor in that time.

In addition, his wife taught women's Sunday school and had great success. In total, she taught Sunday school for 50 years of her life.

"Brother O'Kelley and his wife, Rosalie, live in Van Buren, and made the 50-mile trip each week for all those years, missing very few Sundays in that time," said Scarrow. "He was known in the Concord Baptist Association as Parkview's 'permanent interim pastor.'"



O'Kelley

O'Kelley said he purposefully kept the word "interim" in his title in order to prepare the congregation for the time when he would leave and a new pastor would be called. And his time to step down came this year due to health concerns.

"God truly blessed the church spiritually and financially during Brother O'Kelley's ministry," Scarrow said.

"I sure miss them, and I miss ... being in a pulpit, teaching the Word," O'Kelley said. He said his time at the church was marked by growth in membership, good finances and lack of conflict.

O'Kelley shared a statement he would make to all the churches he pastored, whether large or small.

He would tell them, "My spiritual

philosophy is this: If I do not love the people to whom I minister, I'm out of here."

"In other words, no minister should ever seek to minister to people if he's struggling to love them," O'Kelley explained. "He better love them or he's already defeated."

"And so my attitude was this: Whether it's 500 or five, I'd always ask the Lord, 'Help me to love these people.' As the Lord said, 'Love one another as I have loved you.' And I've tried to live by that when I have ministered."

"(It) wasn't always easy," he added with a laugh. "Some people are hard to love that way!"

But he didn't have any trouble loving the people of Parkview. And they loved him back.

O'Kelley and his wife were honored with a retirement party in August in recognition of their years of service to the church. They were presented with a monetary gift, along with other gifts.

The church has called Bob Richardson to serve as interim pastor as they search for a permanent pastor.

"We earnestly covet your prayers during this transition time," said Scarrow.

Meanwhile, O'Kelley plans to supply preach if the opportunity arises.

AM to be held in Rogers Oct. 29-30

ROGERS – The 160th annual meeting of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC) is set for Oct. 29-30 at Cross Church Pinnacle Hills, 2448 Pinnacle Hills Parkway, Rogers.

"Together" is the theme of the annual meeting. As in past years, ABSC ministry teams will present interpretations of the 2013 theme during the meeting.

Business of the convention will be conducted, including votes on resolutions, receiving entity reports, election of convention officers and a vote on the 2014 ABSC Cooperative

Program (CP) budget of \$22 million.

Additionally, the ABSC Nominating Committee will bring recommendations of people to serve on ABSC boards, committees and agencies. Miscellaneous business sessions are scheduled for 2:15 p.m., Tuesday, Oct. 29 and 9:05 a.m., Wednesday, Oct. 30.

For extensive coverage of the annual meeting visit www.arkansasbaptist.org/absc2013. For alerts and updates follow or like the *Arkansas Baptist News* on www.facebook.com/arkbaptnews or www.twitter.com/arkbaptnews.



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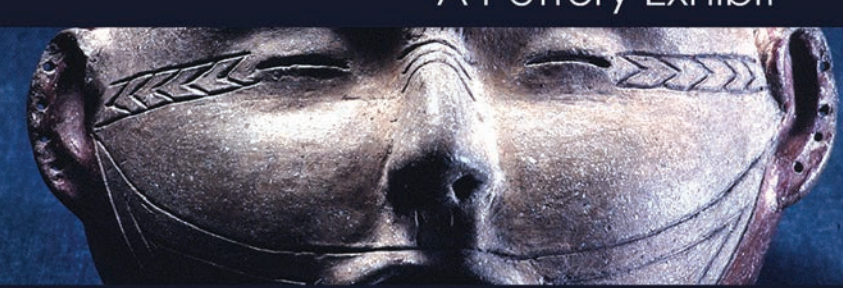
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<p>9:30A.M. -</p> <p>10:00A.M. -</p> <p>12:00P.M. -</p>	<p>Ministry Fair Take a tour of the many ministries at FBC</p> <p>Worship Special Guest: Pastor Valeriy Podpovidnyy (Good News Church, Irbit, Russia)</p> <p>Lunch Served in the Activities Center</p>
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'Hunger Fund' feeds Arkansas, world's needy

WHILE THE NAME of the fund that, for years, has supplied life-giving food for needy across Arkansas and the globe is changing – its far-reaching impact isn't.

While Arkansas certainly isn't a Third World country, it is a sobering statistic that, in 2012, more than 269,000 people were fed through 26 hunger sites affiliated with the Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC).

On Oct. 13, Arkansas Baptists – along with Southern Baptist congregations across the United States – will observe World Hunger Sunday and receive offerings for Global Hunger Relief (formerly known as the World Hunger Fund).

Feeding hungry people is only part of the story in Arkansas, said Breck Freeman, a member of the ABSC missions ministries team.

"Four hundred and two received Christ, (and) over 3,600 Arkansas Baptists volunteered at hunger sites in 2012," said Freeman, who emphasized the critical nature of the hunger offering to reaching people for Jesus.

"Your gifts to Global Hunger impacts more than 20 hunger sites across Arkansas," he said. "These hunger sites are meeting both physical and spiritual needs of people in Arkansas."

The need across the globe is even greater.

"Worldwide, statistics indicate that more than 1 billion people around the world are hungry more often than not, and about 24,000 people – over half of them young children – die every day from various conditions that could have been alleviated by basic nutrition," writes Mark Kelly of Baptist Global Response in a Baptist Press article.

"Certainly, other relief organizations are doing similar work, but Southern Baptists are different: While some groups keep as much as 70 percent of their donations to cover overhead, Southern Baptists are assured that their donations go directly to the actual need," said Kelly.

The new name for the offering is to help raise awareness about Southern Baptists' unique approach to



funding hunger ministries.

"Global Hunger Relief will follow precisely the same guidelines used with the World Hunger Fund. As with the World Hunger Fund, funds will continue to be distributed 80-20 between international and North American causes," said Kelly.

A new website is being developed at www.GlobalHungerRelief.com, and social media presences are being created on Facebook and Twitter. The Global Hunger Relief initiative will officially launch at the 2014 Southern Baptist Convention in Baltimore, Md.

ABSC hunger resources

Arkansas Baptist churches may access a number of customized resources provided by the Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC), including downloadable bulletin inserts, skits, a find-a-word sheet, a calendar and a collage activity for children, at

www.absc.org/hunger. A limited number of printed bulletin inserts and posters are available from the ABSC by request for churches without access to a printer/copier or those that have limited resources. Contact Michelle Hendrix at mhendrix@absc.org or call 501-376-4791, ext. 5249.

WORLD HUNGER MONTH

870 million

people around the world struggle with hunger

Promotional materials available through the Missions Ministries Team at 501.376.4791 ext 5249 or mhendrix@absc.org

100% of every gift you give to Global Hunger Relief meets hunger needs in state and around the world



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This 2-3 hour Deacon Seminar usually is held on a weeknight. The four sessions explore the basic areas of being a deacon and doing what a deacon does.

What others are saying about this Seminar:

"We started a Deacon widow ministry, ... wrote a Deacon mission statement, ... reorganized the Deacon structure, ... and have a new attitude of being intentional in ministry and molding ministry to our Deacons' skills and abilities." **Bo Renshaw, Deacon chairman**

Visit www.absc.org/Deacons or contact Denny Wright, Leadership & Worship Team, ABSC to schedule or for more information call 1-800-838-2272, ext. 5114 or email: dwright@absc.org



Raouf Halaby, member of First Baptist Church, Arkadelphia, and longtime Ouachita Baptist University professor, works on Arms Around Arkadelphia's 100th project.

10th year, 100th project

Arms Around Arkadelphia celebrates two milestones

ARKADELPHIA – Power washing, painting and repairs.

It may sound like a fairly standard ministry project, but for Arms Around Arkadelphia volunteers, the work they were doing on a local shelter for abused and battered women held special meaning – because it represented the ministry's 100th project.

And that's not the only milestone Arms Around Arkadelphia celebrated this year – it was also the ministry's 10th year of service.

Arms Around Arkadelphia – a home reconstruction and repair program primarily for elderly residents and those with physical challenges – assists residents twice a year. Crews work one weekend in May on smaller projects and then come together for a full week in June to tackle larger assignments. The reconstruction projects are completed at no cost to the homeowners.

The ministry is sponsored by First Baptist Church, Arkadelphia – with assistance from other area churches, including First United Methodist Church, Arkadelphia; Second Baptist Church, Arkadelphia; First Presbyterian Church, Arkadelphia; Second Baptist Church, Little Rock, and Balboa Baptist Church, Hot Springs Village.

In honor of its 10th year of ministry, a celebration service was held. The service included a 10-year history video featuring past projects, recognition of some individuals who have been faithful in participation through the years and testimonies from longtime participants. In addition, homeowners whom the ministry had served throughout the years were invited to attend.

David McAllister, team leader for Arms Around Arkadelphia and First Baptist member, explained their choice for the ministry's 100th project.

"We wanted to pick something for the 100th project that was a little more ... community-oriented, rather than just a single-family home," he said, adding that's why they chose the shelter as their "symbolic 100th project."

"Most of it was cosmetic," he said about the work they did there. "But it really made a difference in the appearance of the place."

McAllister, who has served as team leader since 2004, works with a leadership team, the members of which he says have been "steadfast in their support" in that time.

"One of the things that I believe pretty strongly is that one of the real functions of the local church is to provide opportunities for people to use the skills and interests that God has given them in various kinds of activities," said McAllister.

He said he thinks Arms Around Arkadelphia has been a good fit for First Baptist, which has a "real sense of mission" and is located in a college town where people tend to have some "discretionary time" during the summer.

McAllister added that he thinks "people have seen the need and seen what you can do with a group of volunteers if you all get together."

"So I think it's just been a real demonstration of what can happen when you match the projects to the interests and the abilities," he said.

WANTED

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or rluper@abchomes.org

Church life

Hope for the Homeless ministry will hold its first Homeless and Needy Campout from 5 p.m. Oct. 11 to 5 p.m. Oct. 12 in the parking lot of A Woman's Place Pregnancy Resource Center in Cabot. For more information, contact 501-288-7268.

Pickles Gap Baptist Church, Conway, will celebrate its 135th anniversary and homecoming at 10:30 a.m. Nov. 3. Lunch and a program will follow the morning service. For more information, call the church office at 501-327-4781.

SonLight Baptist Church, Paragould, will host a celebration from 1-3 p.m. Oct. 13 in honor of Charles Abanathy's 60 years in ministry. In that time, Abanathy, currently pastor of SonLight Baptist, has served in a number of capacities and at a number of churches and other locations, and his wife, Gail, has served by his side.

Holly Springs Baptist Church, Holly Springs, will host missionary Kevin Rodgers and his family as they share how God is at work. They will speak at 6 p.m. Oct. 12 and 10:30 a.m. and 6 p.m. Oct. 13.

On the move

Sam Whitlow is serving as assistant pastor of Caledonia Baptist Church, El Dorado.

Allen Nelson IV is serving as pas-

tor of Immanuel Baptist Church, Clinton.

Obituaries

Bobby Ray Hartsfield, 69, of White Hall, died Sept. 19. He pastored Shannon Road Baptist Church, Pine Bluff, for 33 years and was employed for 28 years as a welder for the Cotton Belt Railroad. He

was preceded in death by his parents and two brothers. He is survived by his wife, Ann Curtis Hartsfield; two sons; a daughter; a brother; two sisters, and three grandchildren. Funeral services were held Sept. 23 at Shannon Road Baptist Church, followed by burial at Memorial Park Cemetery in White Hall.

Read more Across Arkansas
news online at
[http://www.arkansasbaptist.org/
across-arkansas/](http://www.arkansasbaptist.org/across-arkansas/)

Luter to speak

CONWAY – Fred Luter Jr., president of the Southern Baptist Convention, will speak at Calvary Church, Conway, at 7 p.m. Oct. 21.

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OUR CHURCHES

Ironton Baptist, Little Rock, celebrates 120 years

Jessica Vanderpool
Arkansas Baptist News

LITTLE ROCK – What began with a handful of members meeting once a month in a local schoolhouse in 1893 blossomed into a church with weekly services, multiple ministries, its own facilities and more than 600 members.

Ironton Baptist Church, Little Rock, which recently marked its 120th anniversary, currently serves through ministries such as Mission Little Rock, which was formed by youth and young adults from the church; Women on Mission; Ironton Baptist Food Pantry, and children's, youth, young adult and men's ministries.

But its beginnings were much smaller. The church was orga-



Sidney Thompson serves as pastor of Ironton Baptist Church, Little Rock.

nized with the help of three neighboring churches. Early members met in a schoolhouse until its one-room wooden church building was com-

pleted in 1895. As their membership grew, a series of remodels, additions and new buildings took place, leading to their current facilities.

Through these years, they have been served by a number of individuals, including Sidney Thompson, who has served as pastor for about 15 years, and David Bowen, associate pastor and youth minister, who has served at the church for about 10 years.

Ironton celebrated its anniversary Aug. 25 during the morning worship service, which was followed by a catered meal and a time of sharing.

The worship service included the reading of a letter from former pastor Bill Bowen; the presentation of a 120th anniversary certificate by Diane Parker, Arkansas Baptist State Convention missions support team

leader, and a message titled "Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow," which was delivered by Thompson.

Three descendants of Ironton's first pastor, C. S. Breeden, along with a descendant of charter members, attended.

"God has richly blessed Ironton Baptist Church over the past 120 years," Thompson told the *Arkansas Baptist News*. "He has used this church to accomplish some wonderful things in His name. Not only has God blessed Ironton with a rich past, but He has also prepared a rich future for her. We are truly honored to be a part of what God is doing as He continues to build His Church."

Contact Jessica Vanderpool at jessica@arkansasbaptist.org.



See You at the Pole

Students gather at Arkansas Baptist High School in Little Rock for the 2013 See You at the Pole event.

ABN online

View a photo gallery of SYATP events across Arkansas at www.arkansasbaptist.org/photo-gallery



Six-church revival

Six churches recently joined together for revival, each providing choirs, praise bands and other services. Pastors and revival leaders for the event included from left: Lance Read, music minister of First Baptist Church, Green Forest; Alan Brown, pastor of Freeman Heights Baptist Church, Berryville; Billy McCall, pastor of Grandview Baptist Church, Berryville; J.D. "Sonny" Tucker, Arkansas Baptist State Convention executive director, who served as guest preacher at the revival; Cory Smith, member of Southern Heights Baptist Church, Berryville; Acra Turner, pastor of Rock Springs Baptist Church, Eureka Springs, and David Kline, pastor of Valley View Baptist Church, Eureka Springs. Not pictured is Marvin Emmons, pastor of First Baptist Church, Green Forest.

Classifieds

PASTOR

Kern Heights Baptist Church is seeking a **full-time pastor**. Send resume to 822 N. 9th, De Queen, AR 71832, Attn: Pastor Search Committee or khbc@windstream.net.

FBC, Horatio, completing intentional interim program, seeks **full-time pastor**. \$30-\$35K w/ parsonage. Mail resume to TB Ray, 2301 N. 9th, De Queen, AR 71832 or email pastorsteve8800@gmail.com.

Destiny Cowboy Church in central Arkansas is seeking a **bi-vocational pastor**. This individual must adhere to the Western/cowboy culture. Please send resume to Pastor Search Team, P.O. Box 3, Cabot, AR 72023.

First Baptist Church, Dardanelle, is seeking a **full-time pastor**. Please send resumes to Pastor Search Committee, 118 South 2nd Street, Dardanelle, AR 72834 or email to FBCDardanelle@gmail.com by Oct. 31 2013.

Temple Baptist Church, Benton, is in search of a **bi-vocational pastor**. Send resume by mail to Pastor Search Committee, 8601 Hwy. 67, Benton, AR 72015. Respond within 10 days. No resumes accepted after Nov. 1, 2013.

Pleasant Grove Baptist Church, Rogers, is seeking a **bi-vocational pastor**. Please send resume to PGBC, Attn: Pastoral Search Committee, P.O. Box 517, Lowell, AR 72745 or email to pgbchurchrogers@yahoo.com.

First Baptist Church, Manila, is seeking a **full-time pastor**. We are a two-service, mission-minded church. Please send resumes to calebfinley@hotmail.com or they may also be sent to Manila First Baptist Church Pastor Search Committee, P.O. Box 1304, Manila, AR 72442.

Temple Baptist Church is in search of a **bi-vocational pastor**. Please send resumes to Pastor Search Committee, P.O. Box 196, Waldron, AR 72958.

Big Creek Baptist Church, Heavener, Okla., is prayerfully seeking a **full-time pastor**. The church is located in southeastern Oklahoma and is a member of the LeFlore Baptist Association. Send resumes with a CD or DVD if possible to Pastor Search Committee, Big Creek Baptist Church, 13186 Blackfork Road, Heavener, OK or email to bcbbcommittee@gmail.com.

OTHER STAFF POSITIONS

Bi-vocational youth: Immanuel (Fort Smith) needs one who envisions and dedicates to our potential. We have youth to start, but location lends to explosive growth. For adventure details, contact immanuelbaptists@gmail.com or 479-782-1009.

Baring Cross Baptist Church is seeking to add a **minister of discipleship** to our ministry team. Resumes may be submitted to Baring Cross Baptist Church, 7541 Warden Road, Sherwood, AR 72120

or via email to bcbcmarty@sbcglobal.net.

Graves Memorial Baptist Church in North Little Rock is prayerfully seeking a **youth minister and a worship leader**. Part-time or full-time dual ministry. For job descriptions, call 501-851-1493.

First Baptist Church, Marion, is seeking **full-time minister of worship** to lead a large, multifaceted worship ministry. Resumes and recommendations can be sent to Dr. Clay Hallmark, FBC, P.O. Box 6, Marion, AR 72364 or emailed to clay.hallmark@firstmarion.org.

First Baptist Church, Des Arc, is seeking a **part-time minister of music**. Resumes may be sent to the church's email address, fbcda@centurytel.net, or mailing address, FBC, P.O. Box 578, Des Arc, AR 72040.

Union Avenue Baptist Church, Wynne, is seeking a **bi-vocational associate pastor with responsibilities in music and young adults**. Contact Pastor Gary Henson at ghenson_49@hotmail.com or call 870-208-5990.

The exciting Bee Branch Baptist Church, Bee Branch, seeks a **bi-vocational youth minister**. Please contact 501-654-4158 for more information.

Youth pastor needed at Crystal Hill Baptist Church in Little Rock. Call 501-455-0669 or email crystalhillbaptist@sbcglobal.net.

First Baptist Church, Judsonia, seeks a **part-time minister of music**. Email resumes to

fbcjud@gmail.com or call 501-279-6748.

Formosa Baptist, Clinton, is prayerfully searching for a **part-time worship leader** who can lead a blended service. Please send resumes or questions to billytreece@hotmail.com or Formosa Baptist Church, P.O. Box 1530, Clinton, AR 72031.

MISCELLANEOUS

Needed: **25-passenger coach van/bus** for transportation of senior saints and students in after-school program. Please call Pleasant Hill Baptist, 501-557-5153, or Steve Barnes, 501-860-8747.

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First Baptist Church of Calico Rock is looking for a **used school bus** to transfer children to their WASH program. This program has grown from 35 to 110. They have one bus but are in desperate need of a second bus. If you can help, please contact Pastor Kevin Bishop at 870-291-0994 or by email at kevin@kevinbishop.org.

To place a classified, email Nelle O'Bryan at nelle@arkansasbaptist.org or call 501-376-4791, ext. 5153.

FBC, Lowell, loves people by loving families

LOWELL – From vacation Bible school (VBS) to monthly outings to a back-to-school fair, First Baptist Church, Lowell, provided lots of activities for children and families this summer – and they’re continuing to do so despite the seasonal change.

“Activities were plentiful and varied, laughs were abundant and contagious and Jesus was worshipped through songs, Bible stories, smiles and hugs,” said Penny Sims, children’s director at First Baptist, about the church’s summer.

“According to our pastor, Brother Gary Thomas, ‘It is a fact that children come to Christ more readily than adults. Childhood is a prime time to receive Christ as their Savior,’” Sims added. “We believe that by loving the children, we are reaching out to the entire family.”

Thomas said the church’s aim is to reach out to people in general.

“I don’t know that our church

is specifically child-focused,” said the pastor. “We are people-focused, which naturally leads us to children and families.”

Sims quoted Matthew 19:14 (NLT), which says, “But Jesus said, ‘Let the children come to me. Don’t stop them! For the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to those who are like these children.’”

“We believe that children have such great potential to receive Christ as their Savior and to be witnesses for Him throughout their lives,” she explained. “It is our goal to minister to them in multiple ways and through varied activities, but always with love.”

She said one of the summer activities was “Sandwich and a Story Time,” which was held weekly during June and July.

In addition, they held monthly “Terrific Tuesday” outings, which ranged from a gym day to a visit to a

local aquatic center.

The church also held VBS, during which 21 decisions of some type were made; and 54 children traveled to Bolivar, Mo., for CentriKid Camp.

The summer continued into August with a back-to-school fair.

“Two hundred supply-stuffed backpacks were distributed, multitudes of hot dogs were devoured, 50 heads got haircuts, 30 children registered for Awana and, once again, Jesus was praised,” said Sims about the fair.

And the church isn’t stopping with summer. With fall in full swing, Sims said the church is continuing

to minister through activities such as the Awana program, family hayrides and bonfires.

“It’s time to follow Jesus,” said Sims. “It’s time to love our children, lead our families and share the gospel of Christ in our community.”

“Jesus commanded us to love our neighbors,” she added, referencing Matthew 22:36-40, which speaks of loving God and loving others. “FBC, Lowell, believes that it is our duty to love people – all people. We strive to wrap our arms around people and build relationships with families so that we might find an opportunity to lead them to accept the saving grace of Jesus Christ.”



Students participate at camp.


Soles 4 Souls

More than 100 pairs of shoes were distributed – and many more were left for later distribution – during the Soles 4 Souls event sponsored by the churches of Calvary Baptist Association. The Soles 4 Souls event included a block party, shoe distribution and a gospel presentation. The shoes and block party games were provided by the area churches of Calvary Baptist Association. More than 400 people, including volunteers and members of the Hermitage community, were in attendance.



Campers on Mission

Erma Wimsett (left), Tracy Corder (center) and Clarice Cox make cookie dough at the Arkansas Baptist Boys Ranch as part of the Arkansas Campers on Mission Rally.



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OCTOBER 13, 2013

EXPLORE THE BIBLE:

The power to heal

JOHN 5:2-3A, 5-17

John 4-6 records four displays of Jesus' power. Today we highlight the third: the power to heal.

The circumstances presented in John 5 certainly carry a tone of desperation and hopelessness. Verse 3 adequately described the condition of many people huddled around a common pool in Jerusalem. They were invalid. The symptoms of their invalid condition were varied, but their fundamental problem was consistent. People were totally unable to change their inherent conditions.

One particular person's encounter with Christ is intensified by an intriguing question given by the Savior. His question penetrated beneath the circumstances to the core of the man's belief about – not in – God. In John 5:6, Jesus asked, "Do you want to be healed?" We should probably acknowledge that we find Jesus' question rather troubling or disturbing. Why wouldn't the man want to be healed? Of course, he does! So we think. However, the fascinating part

of this display of divine power centers on what the man's reply revealed.

The man revealed that his understanding of God's mode of operation was based on a person's ability to do something on his own. How tragic; how foolish! God does not work on a first-come, first-served basis. He does not display His gracious power or set His affection on those who are able to take the first step. The invalid could never do anything for himself, and it was this acknowledgement that served as the precursor for Jesus' act of power.

Nothing has changed since Jesus encountered the invalid in Jerusalem.

The message of the gospel does not require a sinner to take the first step toward God in order for God to respond with saving power. The power of God to save is for those who recognize they cannot move an inch toward God; yet, the gospel declares that when they call out to Him, He always comes to them. When He comes to them, He brings power and grace!



Steve Walter
pastor
Second Baptist
Jacksonville

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE:

Even Christians collide

LUKE 10:38-42

"Martha, Martha."

When I read these words of Jesus in Luke 10:41, I think of Jan Brady on the sitcom "The Brady Bunch." In one episode, Jan was comparing herself to her sister Marsha. Exasperated and filled with jealousy, Jan shouts, "Marsha, Marsha, Marsha! All I ever hear about is Marsha!"

I wonder if Martha felt the same way about her sister Mary. In this passage, Jesus shows up at the home of Mary and Martha – and their brother Lazarus – for a meal. The fact that the people involved are named in the Scripture suggests a relationship between them and Jesus. They knew Him, and He knew them. Martha's reaction to her sister indicates strong emotion. It might have been jealousy, or exasperation or even fatigue.

Luke 10:40 provides us with a clue as to what the real problem was for Martha. She was distracted. Mary responded to Jesus out of the relationship that existed between her and Jesus. Martha, however, re-

sponded out of what needed to be done to properly host a guest. This is the age-old question that, as Christians, we struggle with: How do we balance being with doing?

Doing good works for Christ is important, as recorded in James 2:17: "Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead."

So it was not that Martha was a doer that was her problem. She was distracted by her works. That is likely what caused her to have such strong emotions toward Mary. If you have experienced sibling rivalry between sisters, you will understand how easy it was for Martha to look at

Mary, lounging at Jesus' feet, and think, "She is so lazy. Why doesn't she get in here and help me?"

When we let our works distract us from our relationship to Christ, that's when imbalance occurs and problems arise. So let's remember Jesus' admonition: "Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her" (Luke 10:42).



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OCTOBER 20, 2013

EXPLORE THE BIBLE:

The power to meet needs

JOHN 6:1-71

Jesus, being the sovereign Son of God, alone possesses and graciously displays divine, awe-inspiring power! This truth is set forth in four recorded encounters in John 4-6. In these three chapters, Jesus displayed the power that gives life to the spiritually dead, saves sinners from eternal damnation, heals the spiritually invalid and satisfies the spiritually starved. Today we highlight the fourth of these four displays of power: the power to meet needs.

As is consistent with all of Jesus' recorded miracles, the signs always pointed to a greater reality found in Him. Jesus did not simply reveal miraculous power in order to amaze a crowd. His miracles beautifully fit within the greater purpose of revealing the Father and calling people to faith through Himself. This fundamental truth was on display when Jesus multiplied five barley loaves and two fish to feed thousands. This truth was later solidified through a tense confrontation with those gripped by their unbelief.

In John 6:22-59, Jesus made application of His miracle recorded in John 6:1-15. For purposes of this final lesson on God's power to meet needs, Jesus' self-designation as the Bread of Life must be considered.

Jesus was using a familiar Old Testament event to reveal who He was to those who misunderstood Him. The Jews failed to recognize Jesus was the One behind the manna in the wilderness. He was the reason the wandering Jews of old were sustained daily through miraculous provisions. Ultimately, now and forever, He is the fundamental Source of

satisfaction for all who come to Him for the most basic of needs to be met. That basic need can be expressed by a variety of terms – "reconciliation with the Father," "forgiveness for sin," "being cleansed and washed from spiritual filth" or by a host of other biblical ideas or concepts. The bottom line: Jesus is the sole reason for the meeting of the most basic of needs, and faith in Him is the means by which the greatest need is met.



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BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE:

It's *not* about me

1 SAMUEL 24:1-15

Have you ever had an issue in your life that really weighed on you? Was it an emotionally draining issue that seemed to take the life out of you? Those situations happen to all of us at some point. What can really make them difficult is when others are depending on you to lead the way through the uncertainty and unknown.

In 1 Samuel 24:1-15, David found himself in a situation that was weighing him down, going on longer than he thought necessary and testing his resolve at every turn. What seemed to be the problem was David felt the need to manage the expectations of those involved – his own, his followers and the Lord's.

David's expectation was to be delivered from the pursuit of King Saul. The passage says Saul was told where David was, and he immediately "took three thousand chosen men from all Israel, and went to seek David and his men" (1 Sam. 24:2). This had become a way of life for David and Saul. David wanted the pursuit to end. He expected it to end

with one of them being victorious.

David's men also had an expectation – for David to exercise his authority and "take Saul out." They believed killing Saul was the only way to end the pursuit and that God had delivered Saul into their hands. The logical conclusion, in their minds, was for David to "end this" once and for all.

But the Lord's expectation was different from what David and his men wanted and from the conventional wisdom of the day. God wanted David to trust in His sovereignty. God wanted David to wait

upon the Lord (cf. Psalm 40:1-4).

David chose to trust in the Lord and His plan for King Saul. Despite what David expected to happen, or what his men wanted to happen, David trusted the sovereignty of God in an unlikely situation. David realized this opportunity was not about him. It was about the transcendence of God, the mystery of faith and the hope that God will never leave us nor forsake us (Deut. 31:6).



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— 1 Thess. 5:12 (HCSB)

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Revival nets 82

Mount Carmel, Cabot, baptizes 82 at revival

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FBC, Marmaduke

Northeast Ark. church builds relationships

PAGE 1

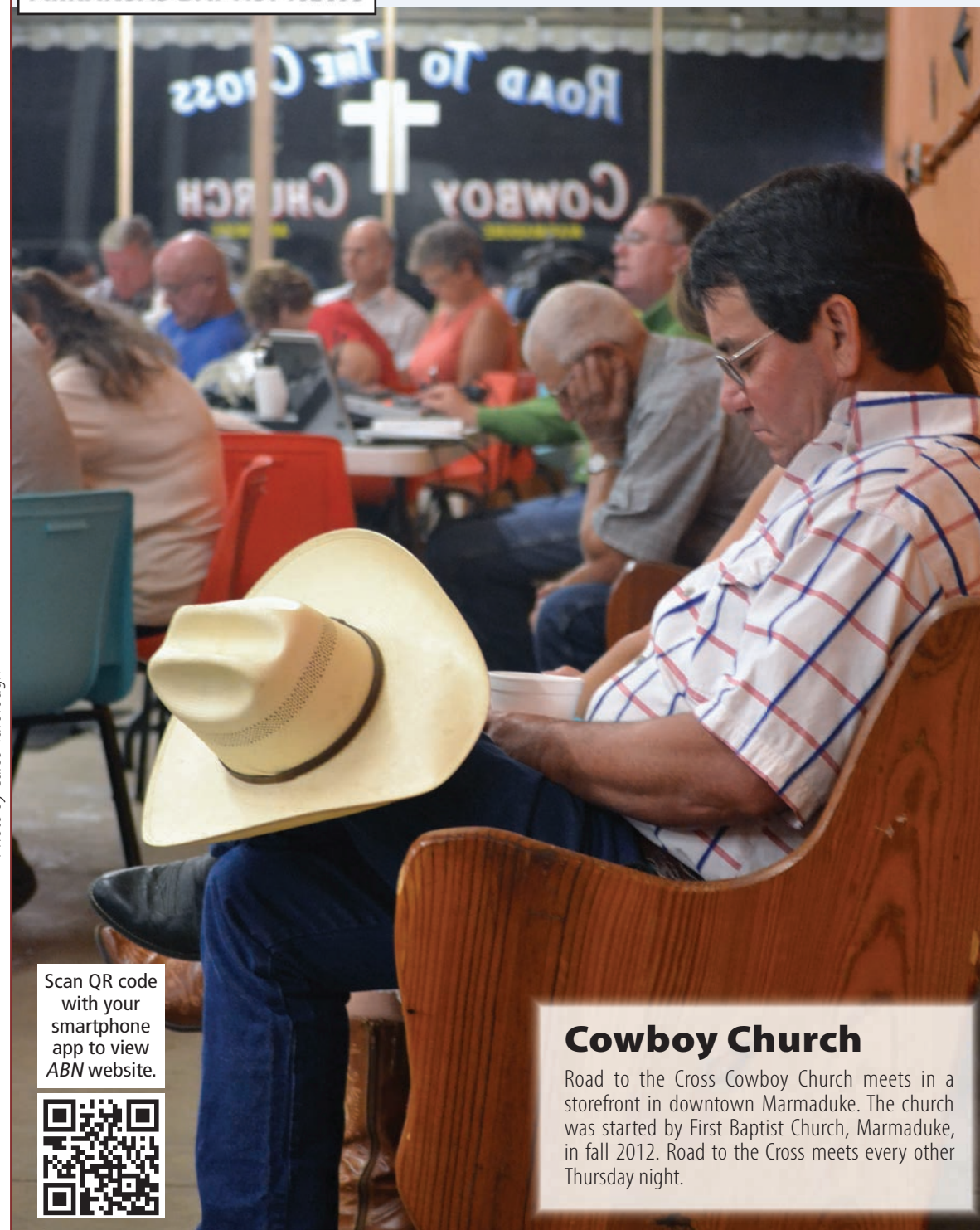


Photo by Caleb Yarbrough

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Cowboy Church

Road to the Cross Cowboy Church meets in a storefront in downtown Marmaduke. The church was started by First Baptist Church, Marmaduke, in fall 2012. Road to the Cross meets every other Thursday night.

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