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ABSC Annual Meeting Nov. 3-4 in Hot Springs

HOT SPRINGS - The 162nd annual meeting of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC) is set for Nov. 3-4 at Hot Springs Baptist Church, 144 Weston Road, Hot Springs.

EveryOne Matters is the theme of the annual meeting for the second year. As in past years, ABSC Executive Board ministry teams will share testimonies during sessions of the meeting of how they have seen lives impacted through their work. Highlights from the work of church plants also will be highlighted.

Business of the convention will be conducted, including receiving entity reports, election of convention officers and a vote on the 2016 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 set for 2:50 p.m., Tuesday, Nov. 3, and 9:05 a.m., Wednesday, Nov. 4.

As reported Aug. 27 in the *Arkansas Baptist News*, the Executive Board unanimously approved a \$22 million unified CP budget proposal at its Aug. 18 meeting. The budget reflects the fourth year of the ABSC's 2013-17 budget formula approved by messengers at the 2011 annual meeting.

Serving his second year as convention president, Archie Mason, senior pastor of Cen-



EVERYONE MATTERS

tral Baptist Church, Jonesboro, will preside over the meeting.



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Speakers featured

Speakers during the meeting will include Mason; John Meador, pastor of First Baptist Church, Euless, Texas; J.D. "Sonny" Tucker, ABSC executive director, and Larry White,

associational missionary for Faulkner Baptist Association, who will present the convention sermon.

Those leading worship during sessions include Jeff Stotts, worship pastor at Central Baptist Church, Jonesboro; Leslie Willis, worship pastor at Parkway Place Baptist Church, Little Rock; Larry Grayson, a

member of the ABSC evangelism and church health team, and Bart Morrison, pastor of worship and media at Hot Springs Baptist Church, Hot Springs.

A time of focused prayer will be led by Wes George, pastor of First Baptist Church,

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80 saved, 1,500 participate in Acts 1:8 One Day mission

TAKING INSPIRATION from the event's namesake Scripture passage, Arkansas Baptists came out in force Sept. 12 for an Acts 1:8 One Day Mission Trip held throughout the Red River Baptist Association - recording 80 salvations.

More than 1,500 people attended the event, which took place in parks, nursing homes, churches, schools, neighborhoods and businesses in and around Arkadelphia, Hope, Prescott, Bismarck and Gurdon.

Activities and outreaches included block parties complete with bounce houses, face painting, crafts, games, hamburgers and hot dogs, cotton candy and snow cones; medical and dental clinics in which 185 patients were served; nursing home ministry, and prison ministry.

In all, 80 people accepted Christ during the area-wide outreach, including 18 inmates at two local jails and

See **ACTS 1:8** page 7

Pastors' Conference seeks to encourage

HOT SPRINGS - The theme of the 2015 Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC) Pastors' Conference to be held Monday, Nov. 2, at Hot Springs Baptist Church is Transforming Our World by Transforming Our Walk, Our Work, Our World from 2 Corinthians 4:16-18.

Tommy Miller, Pastors' Conference president and pastor of Union Valley Baptist Church in Beebe, said the 2015 conference seeks to encourage pastors who minister in difficult times.

"I believe it is easy for us who serve as pastors in these dark days to lose hope and to come to the place where we want to throw in the towel. We see this by the number of men who leave the ministry each month. Paul says don't lose heart, to not quit and to not fold up your tent," Miller told the *Arkansas Baptist News*.

"I believe we can't allow ourselves to be so focused on the culture that it will look as though we are losing the battle. We must stay focused on He who is eternal

and keep an eternal focus on our ministry. In doing so, we can start each day anew, ... as though it is the first day of ministry. If we stay in the Word and stay on our knees, we can stay fresh, and we will remain confident! If we want to change the culture, let us start by changing each of us! Let's get a fresh vision!"

Miller said the conference once again includes an exciting lineup of speakers.

They include Sam S. Rainer, president of Rainer Research and co-founder of Rainer Publishing, as well as author of

See **PASTORS** page 9



Miller

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Read them on Page 16.

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ABN Digest

Stories of interest
to Arkansas Baptists

Abedini prayer vigils set for Sept. 26 worldwide

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) – The wife of imprisoned American pastor Saeed Abedini is on a 21-day “Daniel” fast and is organizing prayer vigils internationally Sept. 26, the third anniversary of her husband’s imprisonment in Iran for his Christian faith. Naghmeh Abedini, in asking Christians to pray for her husband and the persecuted church, also is promoting a letter-writing campaign to ask United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon to advocate for Abedini’s release when Iranian President Hassan Rouhani speaks Sept. 28 at the U.N. General Assembly in New York. Naghmeh Abedini will attend a prayer rally for her husband and other persecuted Christians at 7 p.m. Sept. 28 at Calvary Chapel in Old Bridge, N.J.

Baptist Navy chaplain survives dismissal move

GOOSE CREEK, S.C. (BP) – The attorney for longtime chaplain Wesley Modder who survived an attempt to force him out of the Navy said the decision marks a victory for everyone who believes in religious liberty. “This is a case where a commanding officer sought to punish and prematurely end (Modder’s) career because of his religious expression and beliefs,” said Mike Berry, of the Dallas-based Liberty Institute. “This is a huge victory,” Berry noted. “I expect it will have a major impact and will be used as a case study by those in the military and members of Congress. (It’s also) a warning to commanders that they must act cautiously when they tread on the rights of military members.” Modder marked 20 years of military service in August.

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

IMB announces retirement incentive details

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) – In the first phase of the International Mission Board’s (IMB) plan to address revenue shortfalls, leadership announced details of a voluntary retirement incentive during town hall meetings with personnel Sept. 10.

The goal of the plan, IMB leaders shared, is to offer as generous a voluntary retirement incentive as possible, while honoring the years of service of those eligible and providing smooth transitions for personnel from their current roles.

The IMB will offer the voluntary retirement incentive to all eligible staff and active career missionaries age 50 and older with five or more years of service (as of Dec. 31, 2015). For a missionary couple to be eligible for the incentive, only one spouse is required to meet the qualifications.

“Our desire in all of this is to be as generous as possible to as many people as possible,” IMB President David Platt said. “Since we are asking everyone in the organization to pray and discern if the Lord is leading them to a new place of involvement in mission, we know that 50-year-olds, for example, are going to be doing exactly that. And if the Lord leads them to make a transition, we want to provide for them as generously as possible.”

“We want this (voluntary retirement incentive) to be a picture of honor for past service in mission, as well as future service in mission,” Platt said. “I am trusting that just as God has mightily used brothers and sisters through the IMB in the past, He has plans to use them mightily beyond the IMB in the future, far beyond what any of us can ask or imagine.”

Transitions

Sebastian Traeger, IMB executive vice president, presented specific details of the plan, which includes a base retirement package, a bonus incentive complete with financial and medical considerations, specific provisions for smooth transition and additional benefits beyond the scope of a standard retirement package. Personnel who voluntarily



International Mission Board (IMB) leaders field questions from staff about the voluntary retirement incentive offered by the IMB during a Q-and-A panel Sept. 10. Photo by Thomas Graham

elect to accept the incentive will finalize their decisions in early December. Those with greater than 15 years of service will be given “emeritus” status to honor their years of service.

Not all missionaries will choose to transition to the U.S. Some may choose to stay on the field as volunteers, through alternative pathways or through employment options.

“If you’re in a scenario where you would like to stay on the field, by all means, we want to help you to do that,” Traeger told

missionaries, noting personnel transitioning to volunteer status would be allowed to use their housing and vehicles through the end of January 2016.

The IMB will provide a transition team to serve every person who chooses to take the incentive. Missionaries will be given a transition grant to accommodate their adjustment. Also, local churches, seminaries and state conventions have contacted the IMB offering to help missionaries transitioning back to the U.S. and committing to pray for the IMB during this time of transition.

The retirement incentive information was shared in two segments during the town hall meetings: first to missionary personnel, who mostly attended via electronic communication, and then in person and online to staff, who are mostly

based in Richmond, Va. The two meeting times allowed leadership to convey specific details that pertain to each group.

The incentive originally was announced during an Aug. 27 town hall meeting when IMB leaders laid out a plan to address the IMB’s revenue shortfalls and complete a reset of the organization.

Seasoned versus new

Since the Aug. 27 meeting, Platt said, he has repeatedly heard people ask why the IMB would ask seasoned missionaries to leave the field instead of freezing – or decreasing – the number of new missionaries to be sent in the next two years. Platt reported, after much prayer and discussion, leadership concluded their current plan was the most viable option amid a variety of nonideal options. Specifically, he noted four reasons why the IMB is not freezing or further decreasing the number of new missionaries now.

First, “every type of person in the IMB is important,” Platt said, including long-termers and short-termers, staff and missionaries, younger personnel and older personnel, new missionaries and seasoned missionaries. “For this reason, I don’t want any particular type of person in the IMB to step aside from service. That is why I have wanted to call every single person within the IMB to put a blank check on the table and to ask, ‘Is the Lord

leading me to a new phase of involvement in mission?’”

Platt reiterated the retirement incentive is only phase one of leadership’s plan to address revenue shortfalls. Part of phase two of the plan is an opportunity for anyone working at the IMB to voluntarily indicate that God is leading him or her to a new place of involvement in mission outside the IMB.

Second, IMB leadership stresses they want the initial steps of the plan to be voluntary.

“I want to be crystal clear: We are not asking people to leave the field,” Platt said. “If someone is thriving on the field and senses the Lord leading them to stay on the field, then I trust they will stay on the field. Again, I believe this bears repeating for the sake of clarity: In these initial steps, we are not asking anyone to leave the IMB. Instead, we are asking everyone to pray about whether or not the Lord is leading them to a new place of involvement in mission, and we are providing an avenue for people to voluntarily leave the IMB if they sense the Lord leading them to do so.”

The voluntary nature of the plan also applies to new missionaries the IMB already has committed to send in 2015 and 2016.

“We did not want to say to those new missionaries, ‘You don’t have a choice,’” Platt

See **IMB** page 6

Fayetteville act 'incompatible' with state law

Caleb Yarbrough
Arkansas Baptist News

FAYETTEVILLE – Fayetteville citizens voted to ratify the city's Uniform Civil Rights Protection ordinance by a slim margin Sept. 8 – but opponents of the measure say the fight is far from over.

Originally approved by the City Council June 16, the law is a revised version of a law that the council passed in August 2014 and that was then repealed by a popular vote last December.

The new law is set to take effect Nov. 7 and "prohibits discrimination in employment, housing or places of public accommodation on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity," according to the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*.

The *Democrat-Gazette* reported that the law would create a seven-member Civil Rights Commission, appointed by the Fayetteville City Council, which will review complaints covered by the ordinance.

Protect Fayetteville, a group

who opposes the law, filed a lawsuit Aug. 31 in which they allege the ordinance should be voided due to procedural issues on behalf of the City Council and because of the state's Intrastate Commerce Act, or Act 137, which prohibits municipalities and counties in the state from making laws that create protected classes or prohibit discrimination on a basis other than the criteria contained in the Arkansas Constitution.

Ron Lomax, director of missions for the Washington Madison Baptist Association in Fayetteville, cited Arkansas Attorney General Leslie Rutledge's recent opinion regarding Act 137.

According to KFSM-TV reports, "Rutledge issued an opinion Sept. 1 stating civil rights ordinances passed by any county, municipality or other political subdivision in the state are not enforceable under the Intrastate Commerce Act."

The *Democrat-Gazette* reported that Fayetteville City Attorney Kit Williams and



Little Rock City Attorney Tom Carpenter disagree with Rutledge. The two released their own opinions on the Fayetteville ordinance; both believe there is precedent in state law for protecting lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) individuals from discrimination.

Unlike recently passed anti-discrimination laws in Little Rock, Pulaski County and Hot Springs, which only regulate government employees and companies doing business with local government, the Fayetteville law is broader and aims to regulate private businesses, the *Democrat-Gazette* reported.

Lomax said he believed the reason the Fayetteville anti-

discrimination law passed was because many individuals who opposed it considered opposition unnecessary due to the legal superiority of Act 137.

Proponents of the Uniform Civil Rights Protection ordinance dispute the claim that the law is incompatible with Arkansas state law.

"Attorney General Rutledge's opinion bears no weight as a legal precedent. It is still up to a judge to decide the issue. Her opinion is just that – an opinion of one lawyer," said Danielle Weatherby, assistant professor of law at the University of Arkansas School of Law and executive committee member of For Fayetteville, a group who advocated for the Fayetteville ordinance, in an interview with KFSM-TV.

Duncan Campbell, of Protect Fayetteville, believes Rutledge's opinion reinforces his group's claims.

"I think it means a lot," Campbell told KFSM-TV. "The attorney general, the highest attorney in the state, agrees with us. This election is illegal, just like the ordinance is illegal. It never should have happened in the first place."

Lomax said he believes the news media mislead Fayetteville voters by claiming the ordinance was attempting to strengthen and protect its citizens' civil rights.

"It has nothing to do with civil rights. It is strictly a special entitlement for gay and lesbian groups. It actually discriminates against people of faith," said Lomax.

"It tells them that they have to agree with these people, which we are not going to do," he said. "We can love them; we can minister to them as best we can. But the way they are living their life is against what the Scripture teaches, and we are not going to agree with it."

Contact Caleb Yarbrough at caleb@arkansasbaptist.org.



Lomax



Tingle

his left side, a broken clavicle, a broken pelvis and a broken ankle. Several other health complications arose in the months following the Feb. 16, 2014, accident, including a blood clot, internal bleeding, two bouts of pneumonia and wounds on his foot that occurred due to a lack of blood flow in his right leg.

Since the accident, Tingle has undergone more than two dozen surgeries and has been in and out of the hospital multiple times.

His leg was almost amputated early in the recovery process but was saved for the time being, which Tingle attributes to prayer and God's grace. However, due to continued complications, Tingle chose to undergo the recent amputation.

Tingle told the *Arkansas*

Baptist News (ABN) that after much prayer and consultations with doctors, he and his wife, Cynthia, decided amputation would give them the "greatest viability for life in ministry."

Throughout the recovery process, the Tingles have been able to share God's love with hospital staff and others.

"Jesus has richly blessed Cynthia and me. Your prayers have and continue to make a difference! We have had several God encounters in sharing Jesus with staff and doctors," said Tingle in a post on the CaringBridge site Sept. 11.

He told the ABN, "What we have found is that God is always greater than our circumstances; and it is impossible to put into words how grateful we are for the prayer and support of people in the state."

For updates on Tingle, visit caringbridge.org/visit/robbytingle.

ABN Digest

Stories of interest
to Arkansas Baptists

Ga. Baptists announce new name and focus

DULUTH, Ga. (BP) – Georgia Baptists have announced they are reinventing themselves with a new focus, new organizational structure and new name that better communicates their mission and identity. The new direction was rolled out to state missionaries Sept. 14 at the Baptist Missions and Ministry Center in Duluth. The focus emerged after nearly a year of study that centers around eight objectives ranging from involving the next generation to better equipping churches and mobilizing people to be more involved in ministry and financial support. Perhaps the most significant development is changing the name from the "Georgia Baptist Convention" to the "Georgia Baptist Mission Board" (GBMB).

Southern Baptists listed among top bloggers

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) – A number of Southern Baptists are included on Newsmax's list of the "top 75 religion bloggers" in America, with five appearing among the top 20. "The Southern Baptist leaders who blog regularly have built influence, specifically in the niches they address," social media expert Marty Duren told Baptist Press. "When compared to peers, ... I think our leaders who have engaged are doing very well." Southern Baptist Theological Seminary President R. Albert Mohler Jr. ranked second while Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission President Russell Moore came in fourth on the Newsmax list. " Blogging is a viable tool to be used for discipleship, writing, apologetics and things I haven't thought of yet," Duren said.

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

For daily updates and breaking news, visit arkansasbaptist.org or follow ABNews on Twitter or Facebook as ArkBaptNews

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)

What the crisis at IMB says about our world

As if we needed to be reminded, the recent decision by the International Mission Board (IMB) reveals once again the complex and complicated world we live in today.

Perhaps like you, I am concerned at what is seen by some as a "drawdown" of missionaries around the globe and how the move could impact Southern Baptist efforts to reach the world for Jesus Christ.

In recent days, the *Arkansas Baptist News* staff has contacted Southern Baptist leadership to request clarification on a number of items related to the IMB's announcement.

There is not enough space to go into all of the details here, but essentially leaders

explain that the move by the IMB is being fueled by a dramatic downturn in giving since the recession of 2008.

That event, coupled with a trend of decreased overall giving to churches and the fact that dollars given don't buy what they used to, has resulted in a crisis.

What concerns me most as the IMB offers early retirement to missionaries over age 50 who have a number of years tenure with the mission entity, is the loss of expertise and "brain trust" that will occur as younger, less experienced missionaries replace existing ones.

Comparatively, corporate America has followed a strategy over the years to decrease costs and reduce the burden of older workers who make

higher salaries, draw higher benefits and can burden companies with higher costs in health care.

I am not sure any of us know the complete impact of the reduction in force of the IMB, but retired Arkansas missionary Ron West – who is serving a temporary assignment in Taiwan with his wife – said recently in a prayer letter from the field that the voluntary retirement initiative will affect "almost every missionary we know in Taiwan."

West said he has been praying with those missionaries in recent days.

"Leaving your home country of 10, 20 or 30 years is difficult in normal situations, but having to do it on short notice with an uncertain future is especially difficult," he said.

While the situation is dif-

ficult, West adds, "Let us pray that, as a denomination, Southern Baptists will raise up leaders and churches that will meet the challenge

and carry us to greater commitment than we have ever known."

Tim Yarbrough is editor/executive director of the ABN.

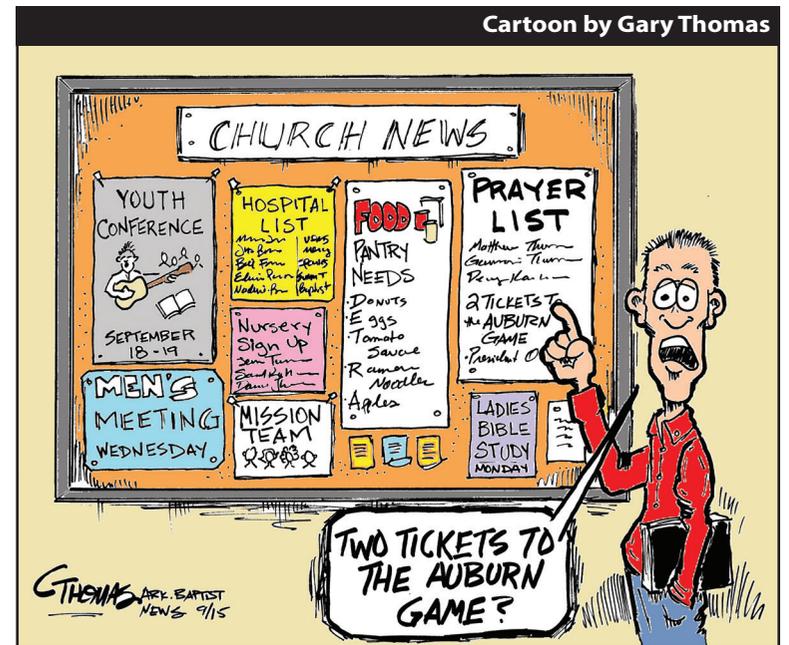


Pressing On

Tim Yarbrough

Phil. 3:14

Cartoon by Gary Thomas



Shocked and saddened

We were shocked and saddened to hear last week that David Platt, president of our International Mission Board (IMB), has announced that financial problems are such that the IMB must ask 600-800 of our missionaries and/or staff to take early retirement or resign, and be off the field by Dec. 31. This is tragic!

We are asking several hundred experienced, culturally knowledgeable, multilingual, effective missionaries to leave their field. It's like the Saint Louis Cardinals administration asking all experienced players who have a 250-plus batting average to retire from

baseball because there is no longer enough money to pay their salaries!

We certainly can't blame David Platt or the current administration for this. They are just facing and dealing with a situation they inherited.

Various factors can be blamed – the economy, lack of a giving spirit of this generation, etc. – but bottom line is that our churches are just not giving as much as they used to or ought to the Cooperative Program.

Brothers, we just can't let our IMB be forced to take this drastic step. Here are some suggestions I have for us to keep this from happening.

First of all, we need to pray! Pray that God will somehow enable us to keep these much-needed missionaries on the field, doing the work God has called them to.

Second, I suggest that our churches, large and small, declare a moratorium on sending volunteer teams to the mission fields and instead send the funds to the Cooperative Program or to the IMB. Many volunteers have done a lot of good, and certainly the experience has enriched their lives and caused them to be more missions-conscious, but there is no comparison between what can be accomplished by several groups of American volunteers, as zealous and well-meaning as they may be, and what can be

accomplished by missionaries living full-time among the people, speaking their language and sharing their lives and their culture.

Third, I suggest that we reduce all IMB salaries – staff, missionaries and retirees, by 5 percent. None of us are living "high on the hog," but we could tighten our belts another notch and would certainly rather do that than to see some of our best missionaries have to leave the field.

Fourth, I believe it will certainly help if we elect leaders of our conventions and boards who set a good example of giving through the Cooperative Program. We have not done this for the last 20 years or so. Pastors have asked, "Why should I lead my

church to continue giving 12 percent or 15 percent to our cooperative missions program when those who are our elected leaders have their churches giving only 1-3 percent?" It is true that many of these leaders' churches give a large dollar amount to "missions," but much of it is spent on their own mission program, sending large numbers of their members to different parts of the nation and world.

These are just one old retired missionary's ideas. And as Forest Gump would say, "That's all I have to say about that."

Edwin Pinkston is a member of First Baptist Church in Harrison and retired missionary to the Ivory Coast, where he served from 1966 until 2000.



Viewpoint

Edwin Pinkston



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Is there a scientific reason why a week is seven days long?



Baptists Ask

Ken Gore

Astronomy defines the length of a day (one rotation of the earth), a month (the revolution of the moon around the earth) and a year (the revolution of the earth around the sun). However, no one has discovered a scientific reason for a seven-day week.

Most historians credit Roman astrology for the modern names of the week. The Romans named the days after their gods, which were the seven brightest lights in the sky: the sun, moon, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus and Saturn. Emperor Constantine adopted these names for the Roman calendar in A.D. 321. The English names are adaptations from this list.

Although the Romans named their days, the seven-day system predates them. The Babylonians, with their mystical belief in the number seven, focused their worship around the moon's four phases. By 600 B.C., they settled on a seven-day week.

While most ancient world nations devised the seven-day week to worship their gods, the Israelites believed that God Himself created the seven-day week from the beginning. The first two chapters of Genesis show that God created everything, including the seven days of the week. By creating the sun, moon and stars on day four, God demonstrates that He is greater than these lights, and He is the only one who governs the days into eternity.

On the Israelite calendar, the Sabbath was the only day of the week with a name. No one was to work on the Sabbath; during their rest, they remembered that God was their only source of life.

Although no one has yet discovered a scientific reason for the seven-day week, the Bible certainly provides a theological one. Every day of the week is meant to be a time to reflect and worship the one true God.

Ken Gore is chairman of the department of Christian Studies at Williams Baptist College. Baptists Ask is reader-driven. Send your questions to tim@arkansasbaptist.org.

Encourage one another daily

Today I feel like griping. As I sit here, myriad negativities threaten to flow through my mind, ranging from my own discomfort to the weather to frustrations galore. And, in all honesty, I want to vent and share those negativities.

Unfortunately, I can't find support for that attitude anywhere in Scripture. Yes, we are told in Galatians 6:2 to "bear one another's burdens." But Jesus also reminds us to lay our burdens on Him. He's the One who sends a fellow believer to our aid. And nothing in the Bible permits, much less encourages, me to lay all of my negative thoughts out there for the world to see.

In fact, Scripture commands me to do the opposite.

Hebrews 3:13 and 1 Thessalonians 5:11 remind me to encourage my fellow believers.

Philippians 4 commands me to "rejoice in the Lord" and let others see Christ through my "gentle spirit."

Galatians 5 instructs me to live in the Spirit, reflecting His fruit.

Yet, even with all of these instructions rolling through my head, I am still much more likely to pour out my frustrations than to share my joys.

Just yesterday, I thought with a smile about the upcoming annual meeting of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention in Hot Springs. I'll hug necks I have not been able to

hug since last year. I'll enjoy visits and delight in catching up.

But, as I was pondering the convention, I realized that I am more inclined toward a mentality of encouragement during those few days than any other time of the year. I go to the convention longing to fulfill Hebrew 3:13 and 1 Thessalonians 5:11. It is foremost on my mind, and it fills me with joy. Yet other days of the year, my thoughts are much more inclined toward my own frustrations. No wonder I feel like griping!

In the weeks between now and the convention, I want to choose a mentality of encouragement. Today, instead of complaining about the heat or how I'm feeling, I want to think of

ways I can bear the burdens of a friend, encouraging her to avoid the hardening of sin's deceitfulness. Tomorrow, I want to consider how a smile or kind word might lighten someone else's burdened spirit. And next week, I want to focus my mind more on allowing the fruit of the Spirit to shine through my life than on contemplating my frustrations.

As summer rolls into fall, may we be so focused on letting the Holy Spirit work through us that the temptation to gripe is buried under a passion for encouraging one another daily!

Ann Hibbard is a member of East End Baptist Church in Hensley.



Uncovered Dish

Ann Hibbard

What a pastor might say about pastor appreciation

October is Pastor Appreciation Month. Having spent my entire life in a minister's family – as a minister's son and as a minister – I can tell you, it is always special when a congregation collectively expresses their love and appreciation to a pastor and his family. I have warm childhood memories that include opening the door of our Ford LTD station wagon and being greeted by the heavenly waft of a freshly baked apple pie, and memories of after-church fellowships where Mom and Dad and each of us four kids were presented with gifts and kind words of love and affirmation.

Several years ago, while pastoring a church in Georgia, members of the church presented to me a new hunting rifle and to my wife, Gaye, a weekend at a high-end resort and spa. The special thing about those gifts is that the very nature of the gifts showed that the church not only appreciated us, but really knew us. And they had taken the time to think through, talk through and plan something really special.

But, sometimes pastor appreciation efforts and gifts just seem – well, awkward or weird. Now, please, do not misunderstand. I know that the gift itself is not what matters, but rather the thought behind it. However, sometimes pastors wonder, "So, what was the thought or meaning behind that gift?"

For example, here are some easily misunderstood gifts that congregations have been known to give their pastors: (1) A new book on the topic of church leadership or preaching. What the pastor easily thinks is, "Is my leadership or preaching really that bad?" Even if you do think

your pastor "needs this," it is probably not the best gift to communicate "appreciation." (2) A soap, lotion and fragrance gift basket. "Was there a leftover door prize from the women's retreat," the pastor wonders, "or do they think I need to bathe more often?" (3) A new tie. The pastor is immediately thinking through, "How many times do

I need to wear this to appropriately communicate appreciation for the gift and not offend anybody?"

There are plenty of very appropriate ways to communicate love and appreciation to your pastor. Here are just a few: (1) A love offering. A love offering is always nice, but sometimes awkward. It is nicer and takes away much of the awkwardness if it is not just for the pastor, but also for the other ministerial staff. (2) An all-expenses weekend getaway. This is a special gift that is meaningful to both the pastor and his wife. But, by all means, please give the pastor paid time off to enjoy it. (3) A book of cards and letters of appreciation from church members. This requires several weeks of planning, but I can tell you firsthand – this is really special. (4) A banquet or reception in honor of the pastor and/or church staff.

The most important thing is to communicate genuine love and appreciation both for what your pastor does and for who he and his family is in the life and fabric of the church. Then take time to pray for him and his family and thank the Lord for the blessing they are to your church and community.

Eric W. Ramsey is an evangelism and mission strategist and serves as associate pastor of First Baptist Church, Fort Smith.



Answering the Call

Eric Ramsey



Support the Arkansas Baptist News!

A fund for the Arkansas Baptist News (ABN) has been established at the Arkansas Baptist Foundation. Consider helping the official news journal of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention for years to come by including the ABN in your will or by making a contribution to the ABN. Contact the Foundation at 501-376-0732 for more information.

How churches can express appreciation to their pastors

Larry White
Faulkner Baptist Association

OCTOBER is designated as Pastor Appreciation Month. This emphasis has been a tradition for several years now. Among average church members, some are aware of this emphasis.

Among church leaders, many are familiar with the concept. But I would say all of our pastors know about Pastor Appreciation Month. Yet many have seen the 31 days of October come and go without a word about it in their church. I pray that you will show your appreciation for your pastor next month and every other month.

Let me share three of the best ways to express appreciation to your pastor. (1) A thoughtful, timely handwritten note is rare and greatly

appreciated. Not only does it aid him in the moment, but he will likely hold on to it and look back on it in rough times. (2) Your pastor will appreciate a gift that he might not buy for himself. Maybe it's a new suit or tickets to watch his favorite team. (3) One of the very best gifts is to love, care for and give recognition to his wife and children.

The Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC) has provided a great brochure you should peruse as you think through this effort. The ABSC would be glad to send you as many copies as you would like. You may request copies by emailing gmccallister@absc.org or calling 501-376-4791, ext. 5103. Inside it, you will find dozens of great, simple ideas to help you.

On the front of the bro-

chure is a picture of Aaron and Hur alongside Moses, which is an illustration of Exodus 17:11-12. Every pastor needs those who will stand beside him and help hold him up. Pastors are sharp. They may expect that you would do something for them in October. But the best way to prove your appreciation for your pastor is to make sure you acknowledge and pray for him year-round. I hope you will encourage others to join with you and use your own creativity to discover ways to affirm your pastor.

There are three kinds of churches. There are those few that love their pastors regardless. There are many that love their pastors, if he loves them. There are also a few that probably wouldn't love any pastor. I pray Arkansas Baptist churches will be like the few!

Larry White is associational missionary for Faulkner Baptist Association in Conway.



White

Ouachita earns A-plus ranking for 5th year

ARKADELPHIA – Earning grades of A-plus from multiple college rankings, Ouachita Baptist University continues to be recognized among the top universities in the nation.

This year's ranking marks the fifth consecutive year that Ouachita has been named among *U.S. News & World Report's* top tier of "Best National Liberal Arts Colleges." It also is the seventh year in a row that Ouachita has been named among "America's

Top Colleges" by *Forbes* magazine.

"We're always pleased to see external recognition of Ouachita's strength as an outstanding liberal arts university," said Stan Poole, vice president for academic affairs. "Though such rankings can't begin to tell the full story of what makes Ouachita truly unique, they do point toward the academic excellence and exceptional value of the Ouachita educational experience."

"We're blessed to have dedicated faculty, staff and students whose efforts and achievements exceed even what is suggested by these national rankings," he added.

Ouachita, which moved into *U.S. News'* national rankings in 2011, previously was ranked for four years as the No. 1 Regional College in the South. Among this year's best national liberal arts colleges, Ouachita and Hendrix College are the only two Arkansas schools ranked in the top tier.

Letter to the Editor

Great time to be a Baptist!

What a great time it is to be a follower of Christ, a Southern Baptist and an Arkansas Baptist. What a great time it is to be associated with believers who hold to the truth of God's Word when it is not popular.

Why is it a great time to be Southern Baptist?

Because we have Dr. Ronnie Floyd giving spiritual leadership to the convention. His keynote address at the convention was challenging and bold. His commitment to the truth of God's Word and to upholding biblical and natural marriage was needed, emphatic and refreshing!

Because we have a state convention that is focusing on prayer, revival of the assembly of believers and an awakening for Arkansas, the United States and the world. The gathering of pastors on Aug. 31 and Sept. 1 was an encouragement to every church leader in Arkansas.

We at Maranatha (Baptist Church) in Nashville are pleased with the direction of both the state and national convention. We are excited to the point that we are proposing to increase our giving to the Cooperative Program next year by 2 percent.

During this time of our seeking the Lord in prayer for

revival and awakening, would it not be an appropriate time to consider that our mode of evangelism may be flawed? Is it not time that we stopped using an evangelism method that may produce more "false converts" than true followers of Christ?

Jonathan Edwards says, "A false conversion puts an end to convictions of conscience!"

God can overcome our flawed methods in saving the lost, but would it not be thought-provoking for us to consider focusing on sharing the gospel and leaving the results to the Lord?

Bruce Short
Nashville

General Suggestions

- Ask a group (deacons, personnel committee, etc.) to plan Pastor/Staff Appreciation.
- Pastor/Staff Appreciation Day is October 11, 2015. Your church, however, may choose another day to fit your calendar. Some churches use the entire month to express appreciation.
- Events or activities that might embarrass the pastor and/or staff members or their spouses should be avoided.
- Be sure to honor spouses of staff members. Include them in any type of recognition or expression of appreciation.
- Consider finding a place that offers a free night(s) for your pastor/staff member and spouse to have a "getaway" time for resting and relaxing. For a list of places we have found, go to www.absc.org/staffappreciation or email gmccallister@absc.org.
- Keep in mind that gifts of cash or a cash equivalent (gift cards, certificates, etc.) are considered taxable to your church's employees and should be included as wages on their W-2.
- Let the suggestions on the previous pages spark your imagination!

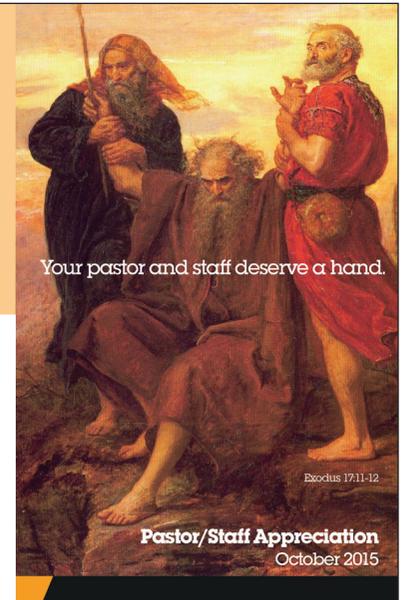
Compiled by members of the task force on staff appreciation

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| ■ Scott Miller, pastor | ■ Rick Porter, pastor |
| ■ Aaron Rogers, pastor | ■ Melvin York, pastor |
| ■ Donny Hargett, pastor | ■ Steven Bell, pastor |
| ■ Larry White, associational missionary | ■ Jimmie Sheffield, ABSC |
| | ■ Greg Addison, ABSC |

For additional resources, go to:
www.absc.org/staffappreciation

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(800) 838-2272 ■ (501) 376-4791



Your pastor and staff deserve a hand.

Pastor/Staff Appreciation
October 2015

The Arkansas Baptist State Convention has published a special brochure to assist churches during Pastor Appreciation Month in October. The brochure may be requested by emailing gmccallister@absc.org or may be downloaded immediately at arkansasbaptist.org/pastorappreciationbrochure.

IMB

continued from page 2

said. "In light of our commitment to them, we want to give them the same voluntary choice we're giving everyone else."

Third, sending people through the IMB "is born out of a conviction that new missionaries being sent from churches through the IMB is a foundational, nonnegotiable part of who we are and what we do," Platt said, noting if the IMB were to freeze sending new missionaries, within three years, the IMB would have zero apprentices or journeyman on the field.

"Further, regarding the SBC (Southern Baptist Convention), the IMB foundationally exists to serve SBC churches by facilitating the sending of missionaries from those churches," Platt said. "The less people we send, the fewer churches we serve. The fewer churches we serve, the more we forsake one of our primary foundations."

A decline in sending missionaries historically results in a decline in the IMB's relationship with SBC churches, Platt said. He also noted that of the approximately 300 new missionaries the IMB has planned to send in 2015 and 2016, respectively, more than half of that number include short-term missionaries. Among

those 300 missionaries, only 135 of them will be long-term. That number is approximately one-third of the long-term missionaries the IMB sent a decade ago.

Fourth, cutting or freezing new missionary sending wouldn't address the IMB's immediate need to fix its long-term cost structure. The IMB must get to a place of short-term financial responsibility and long-term financial sustainability, and simply freezing the number of new missionaries for the next two years will not solve that problem, he said. However, he said, the IMB may need to make adjustments in the number of new missionaries sent in the future.

"I would prefer not to make such adjustments, but this is where I'm reminded that I would prefer not to make any of these adjustments we're making," Platt said. "My preference is not to stop sending new missionaries to the field, and my preference is not to see existing missionaries leave the field. As I've mentioned at different points, the path we are walking is not ideal in any way, but after much prayer and discussion, other leaders and I believe the path we are walking is the best option we can take in a sea of nonideal options available to us."

Editor's Note: The IMB has committed to continue to post updates, frequently asked questions and answers on imb.org.

ACTS 1:8

continued from page one

two nursing home residents. In addition, 17 people rededicated their lives during the event.

Jennifer Bryant, a member First Baptist Church, Fordyce, along with her husband, Keith, and three children, made the Acts 1:8 One Day event their family's first mission trip together.

"We had a great weekend showing God's unconditional love to others," she said. "We came home to celebrate with our church family over answered prayers inside the church. We finished with the Lord's Supper - a great way to finish a mission day! If we obey God and do what He has called us to do, His blessings are without limits. Acts 1:8 mission day is a blessing for Keith and I."

According to Breck Freeman, Arkansas Baptist State Convention community mis-

sions strategist and missions team member, there were multiple instances in which God moved in the lives of the men and women involved in the event.

Freeman said a 28-year-old man, who was a Jehovah's Witness, was saved and told volunteers that he wanted to have a "real relationship with Christ"; one little girl got down on her knees in the street to pray to accept Christ, and a senior adult woman who accepted Christ said she had been sitting and waiting for someone to share Jesus with her.

"The Acts 1:8 One Day Missions Trip was a great success in the Red River (Baptist) Association. We rejoice in the over 1,500 missionaries who came and the 80 people that received Christ as personal Savior in those communities," said Freeman, adding: "We now are looking forward to the Acts 1:8 One Day Mission Trip in Greene County (Baptist Association) on Oct. 3. May God continue His mighty work across our state."

Matt Ramsey leaves ABSC for First Baptist, Rogers

LITTLE ROCK - Matt Ramsey, of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC), has been named director of digital communications for First Baptist Church, Rogers.

Ramsey has served the ABSC for seven-plus years in the area of information and communication for the executive and administrative team. He was a member of the team that worked on new ABSC branding, including the new absc.org website.

"It has been my joy to work with Matt since I joined the staff last year. He has helped us turn the corner into our next phase of media and communications, and I couldn't be more proud to call him a friend and colleague. His fingerprints are all over the new ABSC website, as well as many other projects currently underway. We know he will be a blessing to FBC, Rogers, just as he has (been) to us," said Greg Addison, ABSC associate executive director.

Addison added he is look-

ing forward to working with Ramsey in the future through his work at First Baptist.

Ramsey said that it has been a joy to work with Arkansas Baptists over the years, but feels that God is calling him to a new adventure in ministry serving on the staff of a local church.

"I am excited to start this new chapter as I join the staff at First Baptist, Rogers. I am sad to leave, but when God calls you to a new place, you follow His lead. I will always be grateful for all the support from the ABSC over the years," he said.

As the director of digital communications, Ramsey will be responsible for videos, websites and social media for the church.

"The funny thing about my new position is that I will start working on another new website right after I just finished up the absc.org site.

"It feels like I am starting my job here all over again," Ramsey said with a smile.

Ramsey will start his position at the end of September.



Ramsey



A banner (above) marks the spot of a block party during the Acts 1:8 One Day Mission Trip Sept. 12. The kickoff event (below) was held at Arkadelphia High School. View a photo gallery at arkansasbaptist.org/photo-gallery. Photos by Caleb Yarbrough



Foundation board increases distribution

WALNUT RIDGE - The Arkansas Baptist Foundation board of directors voted to increase the formula rate on its Spending Plan Fund from 4.5 percent to 5 percent at its Aug. 13 meeting.

The increase in the distribution rate of the Spending Plan Fund is effective for the fourth quarter of 2015.

Since the inception of the mission-driven spending plan fund in 2007, more than \$23 million has been distributed to ministries, according to Bobby Thomas, Foundation president.

The August meeting of the board was held at Williams Baptist College in Walnut Ridge and was part of a full-day Board Advance meeting, which included an afternoon board forum led by Wesley Willmer, co-author of the book "The Choice."

In other business, the board:

- Were led by Archie Mason, pastor of Central Baptist Church in Jonesboro and

president of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC), and Jay Shell, Foundation past chairman, in an hour of prayer in Manley Chapel to open Board Advance. A recap video was shown of the Great Awakening Southern Baptist Convention Annual Meeting.

- Heard the President's Report from Thomas, which included a review of recent partnership activities with Camp Siloam during Children's Week, a visit to the Arkansas Baptist Children's Homes and Family Ministries' boys ranch, the statewide prayer gathering for revival and awakening and the Acts 1:8 One Day Mission Trips organized by the ABSC missions team in 2015.

- Heard reports from the budget committee and investment committee.

- Heard an institutional report from Tom Jones, president of Williams Baptist College, who shared the progress of its Diamond Destiny Plan. Additionally, the board heard

a presentation from fourth-generation Williams student Sarah Dunnam, of Jonesboro, who is a senior education major and recipient of the Foundation's Hammons Scholarship.

- Approved an Ezra Amos scholarship request from ABSC college and young leaders team.

- Participated in the afternoon board forum with Willmer, which included three sessions that focused on the following: (1) consideration of the two paths boards often take for pursuing outcomes, the common and kingdom paths; (2) consideration of the three temptations that thwart both personal faithfulness and corporate fruitfulness in pursuit of kingdom outcomes, and (3) a discussion about how the 10 marks of Christ-centered ministry can serve as parameters for decision-making and policy formation. The meeting culminated with all board members signing "The Choice: Rule of Life."

HOT SPRINGS

continued from page one

Rogers; Clay Hallmark, pastor of First Baptist Church, Marion, and Greg Addison, ABSC associate executive director.

Panel discussion

On Tuesday afternoon, Mason will moderate a panel discussion featuring Nick Floyd, teaching pastor of Cross Church Fayetteville; Wes George, pastor of First Baptist Church, Rogers; Brad Lewter, pastor of Grand Avenue Baptist Church, Fort Smith, and Andy Swart, pastor of Metro

Church, Rogers.

Election of officers will be held Wednesday morning at 9:50 a.m. for president, 10 a.m. for first vice president and 10:20 a.m. for second vice president. Resolutions will be presented at 10:05 a.m. Wednesday (see related story below).

Related meetings

Prior to the annual meeting, a number of meetings will take place at the church.



Mason



Meador



Tucker



White

A Hispanic worship service will be held from 6 to 9 p.m., Sunday, Nov. 1, in the worship center. The ABSC Pastors' Conference will be held from 10 a.m. to 8:30 p.m., Monday, Nov. 2, in the worship center (see related story, Page 1). The Ministers' Wives Conference will be held from 9 a.m. to 2

p.m., Nov. 2, in Rooms 212-213. The Young Leaders Lunch and Panel Discussion will be held from noon to 1:30 p.m., Nov. 2, in the fellowship hall.

A Hispanic Celebration will be held from 1 to 5 p.m., Nov. 2, in Rooms 110-111. A Missionary Parents Fellowship will be held from 4:15 to 6 p.m., Nov. 2, in Rooms 127-128. A Delta Connection meeting will be held from 4:15 to 6 p.m. in Rooms 149-150. An Associational Missionaries Fellowship

will be held from 4:15 to 6 p.m. in the fellowship hall. An Innovative Church Planters meeting will be held from 4:15 to 6 p.m. in Rooms 129-130.

Other meetings to be held Tuesday, Nov. 3, include a Chaplains Breakfast from 7 to 8 a.m. in the fellowship hall and the Arkansas Student Pastor Network from 4:30 to 6 p.m. in Rooms 120-121. The annual Cooperative Program Breakfast will be held at 7 a.m., Wednesday, Nov. 4 in the fellowship hall.

For a complete listing of related meetings and other annual meeting information, see additional stories in this edition.

Hollingsworth to be nominated president

GARY HOLLINGSWORTH, 58, pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church, Little Rock, is expected to be nominated as president of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC) during the convention's annual meeting in Hot Springs, Nov. 3-4.

Jeff Williams, pastor of Second Baptist Church, Conway, told the *Arkansas Baptist News* (ABN) Sept. 16 that he plans to nominate Hollingsworth.

"Gary is a true friend to pastors. He has a unique way of identifying and encouraging pastors, regardless of the style or size of the church. Arkansas Baptists are rapidly becoming a diverse group of churches and leaders, and I believe Gary

has the passion and ability to lead all of us, together, toward kingdom growth," Williams said in an email to the ABN.

"Gary Hollingsworth loves his church, but recognizes that what God desires to do in Arkansas is about all of us working together to build the kingdom of God, not just grow our individual churches. That heart and mindset is evident in the way he leads Immanuel Baptist Church, but also in the way he cooperates with other churches in our community and around the state," said Williams.

"He is a great man of integrity and he will represent Arkansas Baptists well."

If elected, Hollingsworth

will preside over the 2016 ABSC Annual Meeting at Immanuel Baptist Church, Little Rock.

A native of Anniston, Ala., Hollingsworth has served as pastor of Immanuel Baptist since November 1997. Prior to coming to Arkansas, Hollingsworth was senior director of cultural evangelism at the North American Mission Board. He has served as pastor at churches in Kentucky, Virginia and Alabama.

Hollingsworth has a Master of Divinity degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, and a Doctor of Ministry degree from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky. He and his wife, Gwen Beaman, have two sons.



Hollingsworth

Resolutions requested

CONVENTION Resolutions Committee Chairman, Larry Page, executive director of the Arkansas Faith and Ethics Council, has invited Arkansas Baptist messengers with proposed resolutions to send them to the committee for early review.

Anyone desiring to present a resolution to the committee should mail a copy of the proposed resolution to the address below by Tues-

day, Oct. 20. Proposed resolutions may also be submitted at the convention until 10 a.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 3.

Mail to: Arkansas Baptist State Convention, Attn: Mrs. Vera Clancy, 10 Remington Drive, Little Rock, AR 72204.

The published convention schedule calls for resolutions to be considered during the morning session Wednesday, Nov. 4.



For extensive coverage of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention Annual Meeting, related events and stories, visit arkansasbaptist.org/absc2015.

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PASTORS

continued from page one

“Obstacles in the Established Church”; Kevin Hamm, pastor of First Baptist Church, Gardendale, Ala.; Kevin Cosby, pastor of St. Stephens Baptist Church, Louisville, Ky.; Ed Litton, pastor of First Baptist Church North Mobile, Saraland, Ala.; H.B. Charles, pastor of Shiloh Metropolitan



Rainer



Cosby



Litton



Charles



Floyd



Addison

Church, Jacksonville, Fla., and author of “The Power of Prayer”; Ronnie Floyd, pastor of Cross Church in northwest Arkansas and

Southern Baptist Convention president, and Greg Addison, associate ABSC executive director.

Julio Arriola, global wor-

ship pastor at Cross Church in northwest Arkansas, will lead worship.

“I truly believe it will be a day of worship and one that

will encourage and challenge us for the work we have in front of us,” Miller added. “If we are going to make an impact in the culture that we have been called to reach for Christ, it will only transpire from prayer and a life-changing work of God in each of us.”

For more information about the 2015 ABSC Pastors’ Conference, email Miller at pastor@unionvalleybaptist.com.

2015 ABSC Annual Meeting Schedule

TUESDAY MORNING, November 3

Presiding: Archie Mason, Convention President

- 8:30 a.m. Pre-Session Music.....Worship Team, Central, Jonesboro
- 8:45 a.m. Welcome.....Manley Beasley, Jr.
- 8:50 a.m. Worship.....Worship Team, Central, Jonesboro
- 8:55 a.m. Focused Prayer.....Wes George
- 9:05 a.m. Church Planting Testimony.....Jeremy Woodall
- 9:10 a.m. **CELEBRATE AR.....J. D. “Sonny” Tucker**
- 9:20 a.m. President’s Welcome and Call to Order.....Archie Mason
- 9:25 a.m. Appointment of Committees.....Archie Mason
- Credentials Committee.....Jeff Thompson
- Order of Business Committee.....Scott Miller
- Resolutions Committee.....Larry Page
- Tellers Committee.....Bob Johnson
- 9:30 a.m. Worship.....Worship Team, Central, Jonesboro
- 9:35 a.m. **PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE.....Archie Mason**
- 10:05 a.m. Dixie Jackson State Missions Impact Stories.....Greg Addison
- 10:25 a.m. Worship.....Worship Team, Central, Jonesboro
- 10:30 a.m. Williams Baptist College.....Tom Jones
- 10:45 a.m. Arkansas Baptist Foundation.....Bobby Thomas
- 11:00 a.m. **EXECUTIVE BOARD REPORT.....Greg Sykes**
- 11:10 a.m. Worship.....Worship Team, Central, Jonesboro
- 11:15 a.m. Camp Siloam.....Jason Wilkie
- 11:30 a.m. Arkansas Baptist Children’s Homes.....David Perry
- 11:45 a.m. Closing Prayer.....Phillip Smith

TUESDAY AFTERNOON, November 3

Presiding: Doug Falknor, First Vice President

- 1:30 p.m. Instrumental Ensemble.....Master’Singers
- 1:45 p.m. Worship.....Leslie Willis, Parkway Place, Little Rock
- 1:50 p.m. Focused Prayer.....Clay Hallmark
- 2:00 p.m. One Day Mission Trip Testimony...Sam Roberts and Jarvis Smith
- 2:05 p.m. **CELEBRATE AR – Delta Network.....Tim Wicker**
- 2:15 p.m. Worship.....Leslie Willis, Parkway Place, Little Rock
- 2:20 p.m. **MESSAGE.....John Meador**
- 2:50 p.m. Miscellaneous Business.....Archie Mason
- 3:00 p.m. Convention Nominating Committee Report.....Bill Bowen
- 3:05 p.m. Arkansas Faith and Ethics Council.....Larry Page

3:20 p.m.

3:25 p.m.

3:55 p.m.

- Worship.....Leslie Willis, Parkway Place, Little Rock
- Panel Discussion (Nick Floyd, Wes George, Brad Lewter and Andy Swart)Moderated by Archie Mason
- Closing Prayer.....Craig Collier

TUESDAY EVENING, November 3

Presiding: Gary Thomas, Second Vice President

- 6:00 p.m. Concert of Praise.....Master’Singers
- 6:40 p.m. Worship.....Larry Grayson
- 6:45 p.m. Focused Prayer.....Greg Addison
- 6:55 p.m. Cooperative Program.....J.D. “Sonny” Tucker
- 7:05 p.m. **CELEBRATE AR – International Connections...Greg Addison**
- 7:15 p.m. IMB Video
- 7:20 p.m. Ouachita Baptist University.....Charles Wright
- 7:35 p.m. Ouachita Baptist University Choir.....Jon Secrest
- 7:50 p.m. Worship.....Larry Grayson
- 7:55 p.m. **MESSAGE.....J. D. “Sonny” Tucker**
- 8:25 p.m. Closing PrayerRick Grant

WEDNESDAY MORNING, November 4

Presiding: Archie Mason, Convention President

- 8:30 a.m. Pre-Session Music.....Worship Team, Hot Springs, Hot Springs
- 8:45 a.m. Worship.....Worship Team, Hot Springs, Hot Springs
- 8:50 a.m. Student Summer Missionaries/KALEO.....Brian Whitney
- 8:55 a.m. **CELEBRATE AR – Send City Connections..... Bob Harper**
- 9:05 a.m. Miscellaneous Business.....Archie Mason
- 9:15 a.m. Worship.....Worship Team, Hot Springs, Hot Springs
- 9:20 a.m. **CONVENTION SERMON.....Larry White**
- 9:50 a.m. **ELECTION OF OFFICERS (President)**
- 9:55 a.m. *Arkansas Baptist News*.....Tim Yarbrough
- 10:00 a.m. **ELECTION OF OFFICERS (First Vice President)**
- 10:05 a.m. Resolutions.....Larry Page
- 10:20 a.m. **ELECTION OF OFFICERS (Second Vice President)**
- 10:25 a.m. Prayer for Newly Elected Officers.....J. D. “Sonny” Tucker
- 10:30 a.m. Prayer for Revival & Spiritual Awakening.....Archie Mason
- 11:00 a.m. Adjourn.....Archie Mason



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2015 ABSC Convention Committees

Credentials Committee

Jeff Thompson, chairman, associational missionary, Concord Baptist Association, Fort Smith

Jeff Dial, pastor, Life Line Baptist Church, Little Rock

Gary Thomas, pastor, First Baptist Church, Lowell

Dave White, pastor, associational missionary, Greene County Baptist Association, Paragould

Denny Wright, pastor, Balboa Baptist Church, Hot Springs Village

Order of Business Committee

Scott Miller, chairman, pastor, Lonoke Baptist Church, Lonoke

Bob Johnson, associational

missionary, North Arkansas Baptist Association, Harrison

Don Settles, associational missionary, Current-Gaines Baptist Association, Corning

Resolutions Committee

Larry Page, chairman, executive director, Arkansas Faith and Ethics Council, Little Rock

Manley Beasley Jr., pastor, Hot Springs Baptist Church, Hot Springs

Steven Bell, pastor, Otter Creek Community Church, Little Rock

Jay Shell, layperson, member, West Baptist Church, Batesville

Ronnie Toon, associa-

tional missionary, Independence Baptist Association, Batesville

Brian Whitney, pastor, First Baptist Church, Searcy

Parliamentarians

Dan Raines, lead parliamentarian, layperson, member, First Baptist Church, Russellville

Dennis Wilkins, interim associational missionary, North Pulaski Baptist Association, North Little Rock

Paul Williams, pastor, First

Baptist Church, White Hall

Tellers Committee

Bob Johnson, chairman, associational missionary, North Arkansas Baptist Association, Harrison

Steve Abbott, pastor, First Baptist Church, Siloam Springs

Bobby Clark, pastor, Abbott Baptist Church, Mansfield

Allen Elkins, pastor, Central Baptist Church, Pine Bluff

Al Fowler, pastor, First Baptist Church, Pea Ridge

Mike Franklin, pastor, Rye Hill Baptist Church, Fort Smith

Donny Hargett, pastor, Calvary Trail Cowboy Church, Louann

Lee Kemp, pastor, Forefront Church, Fort Smith

Mike McCauley, pastor, Bella Vista Baptist Church, Bella Vista

Jim Shaw, associate pastor, First Baptist Church, Rogers

Jarvis Smith, pastor, The Second Baptist Church, West Helena

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ABSC auxiliary meetings set

Ministers' wives

The Ministers' Wives Conference will take place from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday, Nov. 2, in Rooms 212 and 213 of Hot Springs Baptist Church, Hot Springs. The theme is Write Your Story ... "This is my story, this is my song, praising my Savior all the day long."

Speaker will be Jeannie Davis, wife of Tennessee Baptist Executive Director Randy Davis. To register, email Shiela at shielatadler@gmail.com with a

name and church name.

Other events

A block party will be held Nov. 2-4 on the front side of Hot Springs Baptist Church.

A Hispanic Worship Service will be held Nov. 1 from 6 to 9 p.m. in the worship center.

The ABSC Pastors' Conference is Nov. 2 from 10 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. in the worship center.

The Young Leaders Lunch and Panel Discussion is Nov. 2 from 12 to 1:30 p.m. in the

fellowship hall.

A Hispanic Celebration is Nov. 2 from 1 to 5 p.m. in Rooms 110 and 111.

The Missionary Parents Fellowship is Nov. 2 from 4:15 to 6 p.m. in Rooms 127 and 128.

The Delta Connection Dinner is Nov. 2 from 4:15 to 6 p.m. in Rooms 149 and 150.

The Associational Missionaries Fellowship is Nov. 2 from 4:15 to 6 p.m. in the

See **AUXILIARY** page 15

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October 2015

For resources and ideas, go to absc.org/staffappreciation

Historic Hot Springs great destination for the family

HOT SPRINGS – You could say that Hot Springs is a city that has a little bit of something for everyone.

Hot Springs is the 11th-largest city in Arkansas and the county seat of Garland County. The city is located in the Ouachita Mountains among the U.S. Interior Highlands. The city has a population of 35,193, according to the 2010 United States Census.

Attractions abound in Hot Springs, famously known for its thermal spring waters found flowing out of the ground at an average temperature of 143 F – producing almost 1 million gallons of water each day.

The city is situated at Hot Springs National Park, which is a prototype for the entire national park system, and is surrounded by clear lakes, an abundance of dining and lodging locations, nearly 100 family attractions and an internationally acclaimed fine-arts community. In the past, it was named among the Top Five small art towns in America, according to an article by the Hot Springs Convention and Visitor’s Bureau.

‘Valley of the Vapors’

Native Americans called the area now known as Hot Springs “the Valley of the Vapors,” according to hotsprings.org. The area was said to have been a neutral territory where all tribes could enjoy its healing waters in peace. Spanish and French settlers claimed the area in the mid-1500s, and explorer Hernando de Soto was the first European to visit Hot Springs in 1541.

The hot springs were such a coveted natural wonder that in 1832, President Andrew Jackson designed Hot Springs as the first federal reservation, an article at hotsprings.org states. Hot Springs Reservation was America’s first national park, predating Yellowstone National Park by 40 years.

The area was soon transformed from a rough frontier town to an elegant spa city centered on a row of attractive Victorian-style bathhouses, the last ones completed in 1888. Hot Springs Reservation became Hot Springs National Park in 1921 when Congress established the National Park Service.

“Today, you can still soak

in the thermal waters on historic Bathhouse Row. The hot springs are also pumped into several downtown hotels and spas. The water is even available at public fountains. The beautifully restored Fordyce Bathhouse now serves as a visitor center,” the article states.

Notorious history

When one visits Hot Springs today, it’s hard to imagine the city as a hotbed for organized crime, such as gambling, prostitution and bootlegging, the article at hotsprings.org states.

From the late-1800s through

Fortunately, gangster activity in Hot Springs came to an end in the 1960s, due to a federal crackdown on what the government called “the site of the largest illegal gambling operation in the U.S.,” states hotsprings.org, adding: “Remnants of the city’s notorious past can still be found inside The Gangster Museum of America, located in downtown Hot Springs. The museum features classic relics, including old roulette tables, vintage slot machines, Madden and Capone exhibits, weapons, and a documentary in the museum’s theater.”

White Stockings

In 1886, Cap Anson brought his Chicago White Stockings – now the Cubs – to Hot Springs. Due to the city’s “hot mineral waters, Ouachita Mountain scenery, many hotels and nightlife, this bustling turn-of-the-century resort town was the perfect place for something no one had ever heard of: annual spring training for professional baseball,” hotsprings.org states.

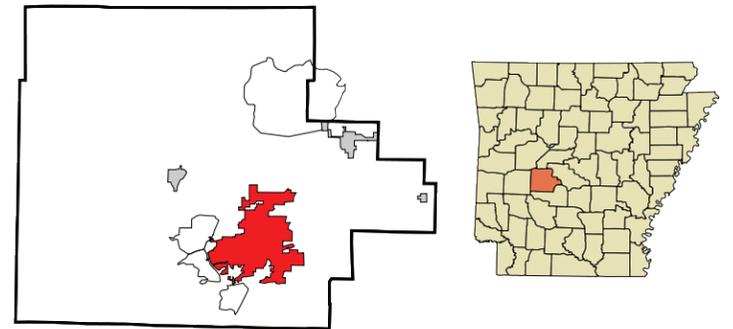
Today, the Hot Springs Baseball Trail preserves the places where legends stood, where records were set and where baseball itself was shaped. For more information, visit hotspringsbaseballtrail.com.

For more information about family-oriented activities in Hot Springs, visit hotsprings.org/pages/family-fun.



the mid-1900s – especially in the 1930s – the secluded, scenic location of Hot Springs made it the ideal hideout for notorious criminals such as Al Capone, Frank Costello, Bugs Moran, Lucky Luciano, Owney “The Killer” Madden and other mobsters.

The criminals chose the site due to corruption that had been going on there for decades, according to hotsprings.org, much of it involving illegal gambling.



Hot Springs is located in Garland County, as illustrated on this map from Wikipedia.

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Block party to be held at ABSC Annual Meeting

THE ARKANSAS Baptist State Convention (ABSC) will host a block party at Hot Springs Baptist Church, Hot Springs, Nov. 24 as part of the ABSC's annual meeting.

The block party will be set up in front of Hot Springs Baptist Church and will showcase the block party ministry of the ABSC.

"Come and check out the block party and have a hamburger, hot dog, bag of popcorn, funnel cake or some cotton candy," said Breck Freeman, ABSC community missions strategist and missions team member.

According to Freeman, the block party at the annual meeting will allow Arkansas Baptists from across the

state to see the ABSC's block party ministry in action.

"This will be set up for you to see how a block party functions and works and how this can be a great tool in reaching communities all across Arkansas. We will show you what you need to do block party missions and/or we can send you a team to help you with a block party in your local community," said Freeman.

"Block party missions are affecting hundreds across our state," he said. "Block parties are a very effective tool in reaching your local community. We are seeing more than 100 people a year being saved in block party missions."

Baptist schools plan events

Ouachita Baptist University
Reception, 4 p.m., Tuesday, Nov. 3: library.

Williams Baptist College
Alumni and Friends Dinner, 4:15 p.m., Tuesday, Nov. 3: Smokin' In Style BBQ, 2278 Albert Pike Road, Hot Springs, AR, 71913.

For more information, contact Aaron Andrews at aandrews@wbcoll.edu or at 870-759-4105.

Mid-America Seminary
Luncheon, 12 p.m., Tuesday, Nov. 3: fellowship hall - Room 132.

For more information,

contact Mark Thompson at markthompson@bellsouth.net. Reservations must be made by Oct. 20.

New Orleans Seminary
Luncheon, 12 p.m., Tuesday, Nov. 3: fellowship hall - Room 134.

For more information, contact Marc Reeves at marc@mywestview.com. Reservations must be made by Oct. 20.

Southwestern Seminary
Luncheon, 12 p.m., Tuesday, Nov. 3: fellowship hall - Room 133.

For more information, contact David McCord at dmmccord57@yahoo.com.

ABSC Executive Board offers budget, ministry recommendations for 2016

RECOMMENDATION NO. 1: 2016 BUDGET

I. ARKANSAS BAPTIST STATE CONVENTION	
1. Executive Board Programs	\$6,390,700
2. Pastoral Scholarship Fund	\$170,572
3. Convention	\$172,109
4. Church Protection Plan - GuideStone	\$103,938
5. Camp Siloam	\$252,634
6. Children's Homes and Family Ministries	\$581,659
7. Arkansas Baptist Foundation	\$340,510
8. Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine	\$290,736
9. Ouachita Baptist University	\$3,159,994
10. Williams Baptist College	\$951,748
Total Arkansas Baptist State Convention	\$12,290,474

II. SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION	
11. International Mission Board	\$4,783,680
12. North American Mission Board	\$2,162,668
13. Theological Education Ministries	\$2,102,883
14. Christian Ethics and Religious Liberty Ministries	\$156,577
15. Facilitating Ministries	\$283,737
Total Southern Baptist Convention	\$9,489,546

III. SHARED MINISTRIES OF THE CONVENTIONS	
16. Arkansas Baptist State Convention	\$124,126
17. Southern Baptist Convention	95,874
Total Budget	\$22,000,000

RECOMMENDATION NO. 2: 2016 GOALS

Executive Board goals for 2016 have been planned by the teams. Ministry goals will be distributed during the annual meeting.





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RECOMMENDATION NO. 3: REQUEST FROM CAMP SILOAM FOR FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN

The Executive Board of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention recommends that Camp Siloam be granted approval to conduct a statewide church and individual campaign to raise funds for a new dining hall.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 4: REQUEST TO AMEND ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION FOR ARKANSAS BAPTIST CHILDREN'S HOMES AND FAMILY MINISTRIES

The Executive Board of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention recommends the proposed amendments to the Articles of Incorporation for the Arkansas Baptist Children's Homes and Family Ministries.

Proposed Amendment:

FOURTH: This Corporation is organized as a nonprofit corporation exclusively for charitable and educational purposes described in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code which are more specifically described as follows:

To provide and maintain a facility at Monticello, Arkansas, known as the Arkansas Baptist Home for Children, and/or such other places as may be established for dependent, neglected, and/or needy children of the State of Arkansas.

- (a) To establish and maintain a child care program to meet the spiritual, physical, mental, and emotional needs of homeless and dependent children;
- (b) To establish Christian homes throughout the State of Arkansas as foster and group homes for children;
- (c) To provide group care and treatment for children whose needs cannot at the time be adequately met in a family;
- (d) To provide supportive and supplementary services for children in need of assistance while the child is living in his or her home with natural or foster parents;
- (e) To provide group care and treatment for children whose needs cannot at the time be adequately met in a family;
- (f) To establish area offices to assist in the placement of children in foster homes, group homes, and/or institutions; to provide counseling services to children, adults and families and to work toward the Christian growth of all children and families;
- (g) To do and perform any and all things deemed proper or needed to meet the special and/or normal needs of children who are accepted for care by Arkansas Baptists;
- (h) **To provide residential care for single-parent mothers and their children with a focus on long-term quality of life improvements through mentoring, counseling, financial planning and additional services;**
- (i) **To relieve poor and distressed individuals in need of transportation by giving or selling vehicles at a price significantly below fair market value;**
- (j) To exercise any and all rights and powers which a corporation may now or hereafter exercise.

The purposes specified herein shall be construed both as purposes and powers and shall be in no wise limited or restricted by reference to, or inference from, the terms of any other clause in this or any other Article hereof, but the purposes and powers specified in each of the clauses herein shall be regarded as independent purposes and powers, and the enumeration of specific purposes and powers shall not be construed to limit or restrict in any manner the meanings of general terms or of the general powers of the Corporation; nor shall the expression of one thing be deemed to exclude another, although it be of like nature not expressed.

Proposed Amendment:

EIGHTH: The principal office or place of business of this Corporation shall be located at: 10 Remington Drive, Little Rock, Arkansas 72204.

Proposed Amendment:

NINTH: The registered agent of this Corporation shall be the Executive Director of the Arkansas Baptist Children's Homes and Family Ministries, 10 Remington Drive, Little Rock, Arkansas 72204.

Pearls Of Grace

Women's Retreat

Saturday October 10, 2015 9am-2pm at
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Guest Speaker is
Laura Macfarlan

"Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need."

Cost for conference is \$30.00 per person, but get a discount on registration if you pay before Sep 30th for \$25.00 per person. Get more info and print registration forms off our web page. If you have questions you can call Vickie Miller at 501-882-8247

Sam Moore Evangelistic Ministries



479-381-1170,
sam@evangelistsammoore.com

Sam Moore is a vocational evangelist and a native of Arkansas. He has the gift of an evangelist and the heart of a pastor. He is available for Revivals, Crusades, Harvest Days and Witness Training. Now scheduling for 2016.

www.evangelistsammoore.com

References:

Lynn Garmroth, Pastor
Cabin Creek Baptist, Lamar
501-253-6830
Brett Bagwell, Pastor
Mt Bethel Baptist, Arkadelphia
870-260-0723
Bob Hall, Pastor
First Baptist, Beebe
501-882-9239

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Arkansas Baptists nominated for service in Hot Springs

ABSC EXECUTIVE BOARD

Term to Expire in 2018

Big Creek – *Larry Ring, pastor, First Baptist Church, Viola

Calvary – Tim Noel, pastor, Trinity Baptist Church, Searcy

Carey – *Donny White, layperson, member, First Baptist Church, Sparkman

Central – *Clay Cunningham, associate pastor, First Baptist Church, Benton

Central – *Terry Thompson, layperson, member, Crossgate Church, Hot Springs

Clear Creek – *Aaron Matthews, pastor, Southside Baptist Church, Alma

Concord – Brad Lewter, pastor, Grand Avenue Baptist Church, Fort Smith

Conway-Perry – *Tom Stover, pastor, Thornburg Baptist Church, Perryville

Current-Gaines – Kevin Murray, pastor, Emmanuel Baptist Church, Piggott

Greene County – Kim Bridges, pastor, First Baptist Church, Marmaduke

Harmony – *Ernest Bradshaw, layperson, member, First Baptist Church, Dumas

Independence – Stacy Reed, pastor, First Baptist Church, Batesville

Liberty – Donny Hargett, pastor, Calvary Trail Cowboy Church, Louann

Liberty – Gina Moore, layperson, member, Immanuel Baptist Church, El Dorado

Little Red River – Doug Inzer, pastor, West Side Baptist Church, Greers Ferry

Little River – Kevin Sartin, pastor, First Baptist Church, Nashville

Mississippi County – Terry Burnett, layperson, member, First Baptist Church, Osceola

Mount Zion – Archie Mason, pastor, Central Baptist Church, Jonesboro

Mount Zion – Bruce Venable, pastor, First Baptist Church, Jonesboro

North Arkansas – *Mark Methvin, layperson, member, First Baptist Church, Lead Hill

North Pulaski – Craig Collier, pastor, Mount Pisgah Baptist Church, Jacksonville

Northwest – Randy Cameron, associate pastor, First Baptist Church, Bentonville

Pulaski – Byron Eiseman, layperson, member, Immanuel Baptist Church, Little Rock

Pulaski – *Julia Ketner, layperson, member, Saddle Creek Church, Little Rock

Red River – *Randy Dixon, layperson, member, Cedar Grove Baptist Church, Arkadelphia

Red River – Craig Seals, pastor, Park Hill Baptist Church, Arkadelphia

Rocky Bayou – *Don Selph, layperson, member, Franklin Baptist Church, Franklin

Tri County – Shirley Forrest, children's minister, First Baptist Church, Marion

Trinity – *Don Neal, layperson, member, Calvary Baptist Church, Harrisburg

Washington Madison – *Barry

Smith, pastor, First Baptist Church, Farmington

White River – *Eric Smeltzer, pastor, The River Bible Church, Mountain Home

District 2 – *Donna Reppond, layperson, member, Pleasant Valley Baptist Church, Heber Springs

District 3 – *Eddi Settles, layperson, member, First Baptist Church, Corning

District 4 – *Bev Turner, children's minister, Grand Avenue Baptist Church, Fort Smith

District 7 – Rose Knight, layperson, member, First Baptist Church, Arkadelphia

Term to Expire in 2017

Faulkner – Dustin Sams, student pastor, Second Baptist Church, Conway

Mississippi County – Justin King, pastor, First Baptist Church, Blytheville

Term to Expire in 2016

Caddo River – Ty Huitt, pastor, Lake Ouachita Baptist Church, Mount Ida

District 6 – Nathalia Burleson, layperson, member, First Baptist Church, Cabot

ARKANSAS BAPTIST CHILDREN'S HOMES AND FAMILY MINISTRIES

Term to Expire in 2018

Clara Cromer – layperson, member, Immanuel Baptist Church, Little Rock

Mark Fischer – pastor, First Baptist Church, Hope

*Dale Johnson – layperson, member, Parkway Place Baptist Church, Little Rock

Tommy Papan – layperson, member, First Baptist Church, Danville

Kenneth Thornton – pastor, First Baptist Church, Pine Bluff

Mary Watkins – ministry assistant, First Baptist Church, Marion

ARKANSAS BAPTIST FOUNDATION

Term to Expire in 2018

Mark Conine – layperson, member, Immanuel Baptist Church, Little Rock

John McMorran – layperson, member, The Summit Church, North Little Rock

Will Rusher – layperson, member, Geyer Springs First Baptist Church, Little Rock

*Mike Seabaugh – pastor, Central Baptist Church, Magnolia

Larry Walker – church administrator, First Baptist Church, Russellville

ARKANSAS BAPTIST NEWSMAGAZINE

Term to Expire in 2018

District 5 – *Juel Zeiser, layperson, member, Barcelona Road Baptist Church, Hot Springs Village

District 6 – Tommy Jacobs, pastor, Lexa Baptist Church, Lexa

Member at Large – Danny Allen, pastor, Rison Baptist Church, Rison

Member at Large – *Stephanie Copes, ministry assistant, South Main Baptist Church, Crossett

Member at Large – Carey Trickey, pastor, First Baptist Church, Judsonia

CAMP SILOAM

(ARKANSAS BAPTIST ASSEMBLY)

Term to Expire in 2018

*Harvey Bowman – layperson, member, Cross Church, Springdale

*Clarice Cox – layperson, member, First Baptist Church, Fayetteville

*Rebekah Davis – layperson, member, Shannon Road Baptist Church, Pine Bluff

Jon Stubblefield – pastor, Barcelona Road Baptist Church, Hot Springs Village

Guy Wilcox – associate music minister, First Baptist Church, Bentonville

OUACHITA BAPTIST UNIVERSITY

Term to Expire in 2018

Scott Carter – layperson, member, First Baptist Church, Norphlet

*Clay Hallmark – pastor, First Baptist Church, Marion

Larry Kircher – layperson, member, Central Baptist Church, Bald Knob

Betty Oliver – layperson, member, First Baptist Church, Little Rock

Beth Anne Rankin – layperson, member, Central Baptist Church, Magnolia

*Mark Roberts – layperson, member, First Baptist Church, Malvern

*C. Randall Sims – layperson, member, oneChurch, Conway

Harold (Bob) White

– layperson, member, First Baptist Church, Searcy

WILLIAMS BAPTIST COLLEGE

Term to Expire in 2018

*Jim Tom Butler

– layperson, member, First Baptist Church, Harrisburg

*J. R. Cox –

layperson, member, First Baptist Church, Walnut Ridge

*Jim Hale –

layperson, member, Hot Springs Baptist Church, Hot Springs

*Raymond E.

Jackson – layperson, member, First Baptist Church, Jacksonville

*Lloyd McCracken

Jr. – layperson, member, Browns Chapel, Paragould

Matt Pryor – pastor, First Baptist Church, Manila

David Russell – layperson, member, Central Baptist Church, Jonesboro

*Brian Whitney – pastor, First Baptist Church, Searcy

BAPTIST MEMORIAL HEALTH CARE CORPORATION, MEMPHIS, TN

Term to Expire in 2018

*Steve Edwards

– layperson, member, First Baptist Church, Marianna

Richard Trout – layperson, member, First Baptist Church, Blytheville

Bobby Wilkerson – layperson, member, First Baptist Church, Stuttgart

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS COMMITTEE

Term to Expire in 2018

John McCallum – pastor, First Baptist Church, Hot Springs

*Ron Lomax – associational missionary, Washington Madison Baptist Association, Fayetteville

CONVENTION PROGRAM COMMITTEE

Term to Expire in 2018

Bob Johnson – associational missionary, North Arkansas Baptist Association, Harrison

Term to Expire in 2017

Don Settles – associational missionary, Current-Gaines Baptist Association, Corning

FUTURE SITE FOR THE ANNUAL MEETING

October 20-21, 2020 – First Baptist Church, Rogers

2016 CONVENTION SERMON

Preacher – Nick Floyd, teaching pastor, Cross Church, Fayetteville

Alternate – Paul Hudson, pastor, oneChurch, Conway

2015 CONVENTION NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Bill Bowen, retired pastor, Village Baptist Church, Bella Vista

Edwin Hughes, layperson, member, Trinity Baptist Church, Searcy

Kelly Jones, pastor, First Baptist Church, Harrisburg

J. D. Neeley, layperson, member, First Baptist Church, Camden

Jeff Paxton, pastor, First Baptist Church, Dover

Craig Seals, pastor, Park Hill Baptist Church, Arkadelphia

Paul White, layperson, member, First Baptist Church, Benton

Doug Wills, pastor, First Baptist Church, Norphlet

Gary Wise, pastor, Gassville Baptist Church, Gassville

Archie Mason, pastor, Central Baptist Church, Jonesboro; ex-officio member

Greg Sykes, pastor, First Baptist Church, Russellville; ex-officio member

*Denotes second term

Visit arkansasbaptist.org for annual meeting coverage!

PRE-REGISTRATION FOR CHILD CARE

- PASTORS CONFERENCE
- MINISTERS' WIVES CONFERENCE
- ANNUAL MEETING - ARKANSAS BAPTIST STATE CONVENTION

November 2-4, 2015
Hot Springs Baptist Church, Hot Springs

Child care will be offered for children birth through elementary grades at no cost to messengers and their families during the annual meetings of the Pastors Conference, Ministers' Wives Conference, and all sessions of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention. Pre-registration is necessary to provide quality care with a planned program.

To enter the preschool hall a security sticker will be printed for each child. To re-enter the parent must present the corresponding tag. Care for elementary children will also be here and follow same procedures. Please provide nap supplies for preschoolers who will be in care during afternoon session.

NO meals will be provided by the church for children. Those staying in child care during the Ministers Wives Conference on Monday **MUST** bring a meal and drink with them for each child.

-----Cut here and mail or fax to the address at the bottom of sheet-----

Child's Name _____ Birthdate _____

Child's Name _____ Birthdate _____

Child's Name _____ Birthdate _____

Parent's Name _____ Home Phone () _____

Address _____ City _____ Zip _____

Cell Phone () _____ Food Allergies? _____

PLEASE MARK SESSIONS NEEDED

Pastors Conference, Monday, November 2
 9:45 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. 12:45 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. 5:45 p.m. to 8:45 p.m.

Ministers' Wives Conference, Monday, November 2
 8:45 a.m. to 2:15 p.m. (**MUST bring meal with drink for each child**)

Annual Meeting – Arkansas Baptist State Convention, Tuesday, November 3
 8:15 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. 1:15 p.m. to 4:15 p.m. 5:45 p.m. to 8:35 p.m.

Annual Meeting – Arkansas Baptist State Convention, Wednesday, November 4
 8:15 a.m. to 11:15 a.m.

Mail to: Hot Springs Baptist Church
Attention: Debbie Beasley
144 Weston Rd
Hot Springs, AR 71913

Email address: debbie@hotspringsbaptist.org
Phone: 501.760.4744
FAX: 501.760.2184

All reservations for child care must BE SUBMITTED IN WRITING
to Hot Springs Baptist Church
NO LATER THAN **October 15, 2015**

Ark. Baptists hold English camps in Hungary, Croatia

A TEAM OF 14 recently returned from a mission trip to Hungary and Croatia, during which several people were saved.

Bob Black, pastor of Ebenezer Baptist Church, Warren, reported that the trip began to take form when he and David Mitchell, associational missionary for Bartholomew Baptist Association, and Mitchell's wife, Fran, visited Croatia last fall to explore the possibility of doing mission work in the area. Bartholomew Baptist Association had already had a partnership with missionaries in Hungary for several years.

While in Croatia, the trio "became convinced" that this was where God wanted them to go.

"It was an awesome feeling!" Black said.

The group decided to return this summer with a team to minister to both Croatia and Hungary since the countries share a border.

Several churches were represented in the work, including First Baptist Church in Warren, Ebenezer Baptist Church in Warren and First Baptist

Church in DeWitt. Several people from out of state were involved as well.

The teams worked with missionaries in the country to lead camps and teach English using Bible-based lesson plans. In Croatia, they averaged 30 students a night. In Hungary, they averaged 60 each day, four of whom were saved.

"We very seldom see Eastern European folks saved in our camps," Black said, adding it usually takes months of discussion and studying of the Scriptures. "But this trip we saw four saved during the camp itself! We were kind of looking for a message from God that we were being effective, and we were kind of wondering if maybe we should move to a different location. God has certainly answered that for us!"

"This is rare for Hungarians as they seem to take a long time processing the information as they keep asking questions and more questions before making a decision," David Mitchell said about the salvations. "These four have been coming to our camps for the last five years, which gives you an idea of how



Arkansas Baptists shared the love of God in Hungary and Croatia this summer through English camps.

hard it is for Hungarians to come to a decision."

Mitchell said they are hoping to expand their ministry reach in both countries. They hope to start holding a second camp in Hungary. In addition, they have the opportunity to work with seven churches in Croatia - five being close to Daruvar, where they served this year, and two being close to the capital city of Zagreb - to hold camps in the future.

"What we need is more

partners to help with this expanding opportunity," Mitchell said, noting the "biggest bump in the road" has come in the form of the cost of travel and the "need to keep returning to the same area for a number of years."

"If we could line up a church or an association as a partner at least in Croatia, we could cover all of the area in one week. Otherwise, we would have to plan on two weeks in Croatia and another week or two in Hungary," he

said, noting such a schedule would be difficult for their group.

For more information, call 870-226-7533.

AUXILIARY

continued from page 10

fellowship hall.

The **Innovative Church Planters** is Nov. 2 from 4:15 to 6 p.m. in Rooms 129 and 130.

Honor your pastor in the ABN

WITH OCTOBER fast approaching as Pastor Appreciation Month, now is the time for churches to begin making plans to honor, recognize and encourage their pastors.

A church can honor its pastor in a variety of ways.

For the past several years, the *Arkansas Baptist News* has

offered special ad rates for churches that want to place a special recognition in the newspaper that will be seen by thousands of fellow Baptists across the state. For additional information and example ads, visit arkansasbaptist.org/pastor-appreciation or call 800-838-2272, ext. 5161.

Jennifer Cloyde resigns from ABCHomes

LITTLE ROCK - A going-away luncheon was held Sept. 11 in honor of Jennifer Cloyde, who served for nearly 24 years as leader of the former Promise House Maternity Home for pre-teens and teens.



Cloyde

The home was a ministry of Arkansas Baptist Children's

Homes and Family Ministries (ABC Homes) from 1991-2015.

Attending the event were several former and current ABC Homes staff members and friends.

Cloyde's last day of service was Sept. 15. She will be returning to Tulsa, Okla., her

hometown.

"Jennifer Cloyde was a part of the Promise House ministry before we took our first girl in 1991," said David Perry, ABC Homes executive director. "I'm not sure I can think of any one individual that has been more a part of ministry than Jennifer has been a part of Promise House. She has poured her life into these pregnant teens and preteens."

Elliott Baptist Church, Camden, celebrates 125 years, looks to future

CAMDEN - Elliott Baptist Church, Camden, celebrated its 125th anniversary Aug. 16.

Pastor Paul Easter Jr. said they didn't "go all-out" for the service; they simply wanted to remember their past and "how God's kept us together as a church for that long" and then to learn and grow from their past.

"We're just looking ... for many more years of His blessing," he said.

Easter said more than 120 people attended. Regularly, the church runs around 80 in the morning service.

Easter said that "you could see the connections" between people as they recalled memories and connected with each other.

During the morning service, the church recognized families of charter members; recognized their oldest member, Cecil Warnock; recalled their

church's history; celebrated milestones, and took part in worship led by former and present worship leaders. Bob Harper, team leader of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC) missions team, preached from 1 Corinthians 3:9 about laboring together with the Lord.

Harper also shared with the church that in the last 20 years, they have baptized about 100 people and given almost

\$300,000 through the Cooperative Program.

Harper presented the church with a certificate from the ABSC in honor of the church's 125 years of ministry.

"Elliott Baptist Church has been a faithful witness for our Lord since 1890. During these 125 years, countless lives have been changed," Harper told the *Arkansas Baptist News*.

After the service, a fellow-

ship lunch look place, followed by an afternoon session of singing and a message brought by Easter. Easter pointed the church to look at where God is taking them in the future. He preached from the Book of Joshua about how Joshua looked to the past and the change of leadership and then looked to the future.

"It was an outstanding day. It was just really good," Easter said.

Camp Agape Ark. reaches children of incarcerated parents

SCOTTSVILLE – Twenty-five children attended the first-ever Camp Agape Arkansas, held by First Baptist Church, Hatfield, at Camp Caudle near Scottsville Aug. 6-9.

Camp Agape Arkansas, which ministers to children whose parents are in prison, is a ministry adopted by First Baptist in partnership with Angel Tree ministry, Prison Fellowship ministry and other Christian fellowships throughout the state.

“Love, trust, forgiveness and hope was our camp theme, and each child learned, received and left knowing without a doubt that each one came from God,” said Rita Keener, children’s and missions ministry coordinator for First Baptist and co-coordinator for Camp Agape Arkansas.

The Camp Agape Arkansas team consisted of Keener, Pastor Scott O’Rear and church members Beau Stricklin, Laurel Stricklin and Jean Humphries.

According to the camp’s website, the goal of Camp Agape is to reach out to incarcerated parents and their children “to see whole families transformed by God’s unconditional love.”

“Agape” love, according to the website, is always the camp’s theme; and an “intentional series of activities and events” are schedule to facilitate sharing the gospel with students “through love, trust, forgiveness and hope.”

Keener said several children accepted Christ as Savior at the camp, and many adults were impacted as well.

“We were the hands of Jesus reaching down and giving unconditional love,” said Keener. “Walls came down as the smiles went up.”

The children took part in activities ranging from swimming, repelling and canoeing to crafts, games

and dance contests. In addition, praise and worship, which included bands and speakers, took place daily.

“Our first annual Camp Agape Arkansas was a huge success,” Keener said. “God poured out His blessings all week long. We endured the highest temperatures of this year, but the Holy Spirit flowed like a soft, cool breeze.”

Camp mentors came from across the state, and six came from Hawaii’s Camp Agape. Camp Agape began in Hawaii in 2005.

The Arkansas camp only worked with children from Polk and Pope counties this year, but Keener said the goal is to involve the entire state eventually.

“Camp Agape Arkansas is not only about one week a summer,” she said. “It is about building relationships with children who have a parent incarcerated, mentoring them throughout the entire year, leading them to Christ and seeing a life change forever.”

For more information, contact Keener at trkeener2@gmail.com.



Mentors pray with boys who accepted Christ as Savior during Camp Agape Arkansas.

Workshop to teach basics of oral Bible storying

LITTLE ROCK – A one-day Bible Storying Workshop will take place from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Oct. 17 at the Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC) building in Little Rock.

The event will teach the basics of oral Bible storying, including how to lead a fellowship group, how to connect one’s personal story to a story from Scripture and how to craft Bible stories for use in local and international ministries. Jamie Coker, member of First Baptist Church, El Dorado, will serve as trainer.

“In Bible Storying Workshops, participants can learn to effectively craft Bible stories and practice telling the stories in small groups,” said Debbie Moore, ABSC missions team member. “With practice, telling the stories leads to competency and skill as an evangelistic Bible storyer. Bible storying is very relational, which is good for sharing a gospel witness in a friendly and conversational manner.”

To register, email asummers@absc.org or call 501-376-4791, ext. 5137.

Classifieds

PASTOR

Bethel Baptist Church, Norman, Okla., is seeking a **full-time senior pastor**. Located approximately 1 mile from the University of Oklahoma, we are a conservative Southern Baptist church that supports the Cooperative Program. Please email resumes to bbcnormanpsc@gmail.com or send to Pastor Search Committee, Bethel Baptist Church, 1717 W. Lindsey St., Norman, OK 73069.

Pastor: Lequire Baptist Church, located 12 miles south of Stigler, Okla., seeking pastor. Send resume: Lequire Baptist Church, 30079 W. Highway 31, McCurtain, OK 74944 or lequirebaptistchurch@yahoo.com.

Highland Hills Baptist Church is seeking a **bi-vocational pastor**. Email resume to hhbc.search@gmail.com (preferred) or mail resumes to Search Committee, HHBC, 4106 E. 9th St., Texarkana, AR 71854.

First Baptist Church of Lockesburg is seeking a **full-time pastor**. Please send resumes to Pastor Selection Committee, FBC, P.O. Box 53, Lockesburg, AR 71846 or fbsec-retary@outlook.com.

First Baptist Church, Gillett, is seeking a **bi-vocational or retired pastor**. Send resumes to First Baptist Church, Attn. Pastor Search Committee, P.O. Box 117, Gillett, AR 72055. For more information, phone Tricia Hayes: 870-548-2547.

The First Baptist Church of Valley Springs is prayerfully seeking to fill the position of **senior pastor**. Respond to info@fbcvs.com.

Leonard Street Baptist Church is seeking a **part-time bi-vocational pastor**. Please mail resumes to Search Committee, Leonard Street Baptist Church, 625 Leonard St., Hot Springs, AR 71913. (No phone calls please.)

Trinity Baptist Church, Fort Smith, is seeking a **bi-vocational pastor**. Please send resume to Trinity Baptist Pastor Search Committee, 3619 N. 6th, Fort Smith, AR 72904 or email mackjoretta@gmail.com.

Cedar Glades Baptist Church in Mountain Pine is seeking a conservative **full-time pastor**. Please send resume to Cedar Glades Baptist Church, Pastor Search Committee, 303 Gum Springs Road, Mountain Pine, AR 71956.

Armored Baptist Church is renewing search for **full-time pastor**. Please submit resumes, CDs or websites for review. Pastor Search Committee, linda@armoredbaptist.com.

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

Reynolds Memorial Baptist Church,

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

OTHER STAFF POSITIONS

First Baptist Church of Newport is looking for a **full-time youth pastor**. Please send resume to Pastor Greg Dills at the following email: pray4raingwd@gmail.com.

Calvary Baptist Church is seeking an energetic, creative **college minister and media specialist**. This individual needs to have a committed, growing relationship with Jesus Christ, an interest in serving college-age individuals in the unique transition from high school to adulthood and a working knowledge of church-related technology needs, such as sound setup, projection and other computer needs. Other duties and responsibilities include working closely with other members of the staff and community in order to support the total church ministry of lifting up Jesus. A college degree is preferred and other experience will be considered. Full benefits included. Mail resumes to Paula Word, Calvary Baptist Church, 319 Highway 278 E., Camden, AR 71701 or email paula@calvaryofcamden.org.

FBC, Woodward, Okla., seeking **full-time minister of education/administrator/children’s minister**. Send resumes to drguy@fbcwoodward.org.

First Baptist, Searcy, is seeking a **full-time preschool ministry coordinator**. Responsibilities include ministries related to children in kindergarten and younger and their families. A bachelor’s degree in a related field is preferred, and candidate must have some experience working with children/young families. Email resumes by Sept. 30 to linda@fbcsearcy.org or mail to FBC Searcy, Attn: Linda Stake, 105 S. Spring St., Searcy, AR 72143.

Calvary Baptist is looking for a **full-time worship pastor**. We are looking for a man of God who is called to lead our congregation in worship. We do not believe worship only happens on stage on Sunday morning. We believe worship is a lifestyle that is lived out all day every day. We feel God is calling us to understand this concept in a more complete way, and we are seeking a pastor who understands the gravity and importance of worship and who can communicate this important element of our faith in multiple ways including, but not limited to, the musical aspect that happens during weekly services. Calvary Baptist Church, 2650 Oakridge Ext., Neosho, MO 64850, 417-451-4763 or email austinwylly@me.com.

Monte Ne Baptist Church, Rogers, seeking

bi-vocational minister of music to lead blended worship service. Email resume to mnbrogers@att.net.

Southern Heights Baptist Church is currently seeking a **full-time worship leader**. Resumes may be sent to shbc@windstream.net or to 279 Highway 221 S., Berryville, AR 72616.

Union Valley Baptist Church of Beebe is seeking a **full-time minister of music** to lead our blended worship services. Located in central Arkansas, Union Valley has an average worship attendance of 500. This individual will be responsible for directing adult and youth choirs, as well as the praise band. Send resume to timsparks@centurytel.net.

MISCELLANEOUS

Disabled retired pastor’s library to be given away free. One book or hundreds. Call 501-607-1282 for more information.

Two buses, 25-passenger. Call George Foshee: 501-767-6020. American Bus Sales.

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

arkansasbaptist.org/ad

Church life

Old Austin Baptist Church, Austin, will celebrate its 180th anniversary at their homecoming celebration Oct. 11. The morning worship service will begin at 10:45 a.m. Darrel Ray, Arkansas Baptist State Convention evangelism and church health team member, will preach and will present a certificate in recognition of the church's anniversary.

Union Valley Baptist Church in Beebe will hold The Event revival services at 8:30 a.m., 10:50 a.m. and 6 p.m. Sept. 27 and at 7 p.m. Sept. 28-30. Ken Freeman will serve as the evangelist. A block party will be held from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Sept. 26 in front of the Beebe Walmart to kick off the event with free food, games and prizes.

Union Valley Baptist Church in Beebe will host the Pearls of Grace women's retreat from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Oct. 10. Check-in and registration will begin at 8 a.m. Laura Macfarlan, director of Heart Life Women's Ministry at First Baptist Church, Siloam Springs, will serve as guest speaker, and entertainment will be provided by Gertie and LC. For more information or to register, contact the church office at 501-882-6189 or visit unionvalleybaptist.com.

Rison Baptist Church, Rison, will hold revival services at 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. Sept.

27 and at 7 p.m. Sept. 28-30. Wade Akins, who leads a mission operation called Pioneer Missions, will serve as speaker.

Immanuel Baptist Church, Little Rock, will sponsor its Victory Car Show from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Oct. 10.

Cherry Valley Baptist Church, Cherry Valley, will celebrate its 148th anniversary and homecoming at 10:30 a.m. Oct. 11, followed by a potluck lunch. Ferrel Duffel will bring the message. Revival services will begin at 6 p.m. with Randall Creel from Forest, Miss. Services will take place at 7 p.m. Oct. 12-16. Everyone is invited.

Geyer Springs First Baptist Church, Little Rock, will celebrate its 75th anniversary at 9:30 a.m. Sept. 27. The service will be followed by a church-wide meal. There will also be an opportunity to tour and to pray over the church's new building addition. Former pastors and staff have been invited to attend.

Red Oak Baptist Church in Marked Tree will celebrate its 75th anniversary in the morning service Oct. 11. Former Pastor Larry Deaton will bring the message, and Ethan Constant will lead worship. Mark Constant is pastor.

On the move

Jeff Williams is serving as pastor of Second Baptist Church in Conway.

Glenn Crain recently resigned after serving 24 years as music director at Green Meadows Baptist Church in Pine Bluff, where he has been a lifelong member.

Jon Racic is serving on the staff of Southern Heights Baptist Church in Berryville as student minister.

Rhonda Ingram is serving as counselor for the counseling center at Calvary Baptist Association.



Submit your church news to
jeanie@arkansasbaptist.org



98-YEAR-OLD BAPTIZED — Toby Talley, pastor of Marshall Road Baptist Church, Jacksonville, baptized Elsie Ferreira, 98, during a Sept. 6 worship service. Ferreira recently accepted Christ as Savior. Pictured from left: member Ryan Dewey, Talley and Ferreira.

Connect 2015 to offer local missions experience

MONTICELLO — Connect 2015, a short-term, local mission trip for students, will take place Oct. 16-18 in Monticello. Participants will be housed at First Baptist Church, Monticello.

Travis McCormick, Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC) missions team mem-

ber, explained that the event is designed to offer students the experience of a week-long mission trip packaged into a single weekend. The goal is for students to connect with God

through worship, devotions, prayer time and evangelism and ministry opportunities, as

well as to connect with fellow Christians and the community through work projects, such as construction and yard work.

The event is sponsored by the ABSC missions team.

As part of Connect 2015 and in partnership with the ABSC college and young leaders team, students will also take part in a Haystack prayer meeting, which is a time of prayer for repentance, revival and renewal, on Oct. 17.



STAFF WANTED

Houseparents:

Boys Ranch, Harrison. This full-time position includes salary, housing, medical and life insurance and paid leave.

Contact: Bill Vondermehden at (870) 741-5784 or bvondermehden@abchomes.org.

abchomes.org



Happy Birthday!

to all the missionary kids attending college who are celebrating birthdays in the month of October.

- ◆ Oct. 4: Bethany Cummins, WBC, Box 3702, Walnut Ridge, AR 72476; Asia
- ◆ Oct. 23: Jacob Moreno, OBU Box 3479, Arkadelphia, AR 71998-0001; Mexico.
- ◆ Oct. 27: David Headrick, OBU Box 3490, Arkadelphia, AR 71998-0001; Germany.

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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)

'Captive' shows salvation, hope, redemption

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) – Academy Award nominee David Oyelowo was drawn to his starring role in the movie "Captive" because the true story of the 2005 Atlanta-area murder and hostage saga shows the power of the gospel, he told Pastor Rick Warren, of Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, Ca.

Oyelowo, acclaimed for his role of Martin Luther King Jr. in the 2014 movie "Selma," in "Captive" portrays Brian Nichols, an accused rapist who escapes jail, murders four people and injures others before holding methamphetamine addict Ashley Smith hostage in her home overnight. Smith reads to Nichols from Warren's book "The Purpose Driven Life" and successfully encourages Nichols to release her and surrender to police.

"Often what comes out of Hollywood is not edifying, not godly, doesn't have a moral compass, certainly doesn't



hint at true hope," Oyelowo said. "This was a story that I just knew I had to be part of seeing come to fruition."

The film showcases Smith as the methamphetamine addict she was when Nichols overtook her outside her home, and brings to screen the story of their interactions before Nichols surrendered to police.

It was when she refused Nichols' offer of meth during

the hostage ordeal that God delivered her from the addiction, Smith told Baptist Press.

Since the ordeal, Smith has used her life to tell of the forgiveness, deliverance and redemption she has found in Christ. She has remarried, regained custody of her daughter, is author of "Unlikely Angel: The Untold Story of the Atlanta Hostage Hero" and often speaks at meetings of the Celebrate Recovery dis-

cipleship ministry founded by Saddleback Church.

Smith had accepted Christ when she was 7 years old and had been baptized by Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee President Frank S. Page when he was pastor of Warren Baptist Church in Augusta, Ga. During her struggles, Satan tried to convince her she was lost, she said.

Oyelowo can relate to Smith's experience, he told Warren.

"When I became a Christian at the age of 16, it was outside of my religious experience; it was outside of ... my upbringing," Oyelowo said. "I felt God say to me, 'David there is nothing you can do to make Me love you less. And I truly believe it was a revelation of that fact, in the midst of this event, that started to turn things for Ashley.'"

"Captive" opened nationwide Sept. 18.

Americans differ on views of suicide

MOST AMERICANS believe they are seeing an epidemic in the United States of people taking their own lives.

But most Americans don't view suicide as a selfish choice, and they don't believe it sends people to hell, LifeWay Research finds.

"Americans are responding with compassion to a tragedy that touches many families," said Scott McConnell, LifeWay Research vice president. "For example, as researchers learn more about the effects of mental illness, people may be more likely to react to suicide with mercy."

Concern is highest among the oldest half of the millennial generation, those 25 to 34 years old. This age group is more likely than others to perceive an epidemic of suicide (66 percent), say suicide is selfish (45 percent) and believe those who commit suicide go to hell (27 percent, matching 35- to 44-year-olds).

Federal data show suicides have been on the rise since 2005. This is not unprecedented; suicide rates were almost as high in the mid-1980s. And globally, the United States isn't even in the top 50.

But among 25- to 34-year-olds, suicide is the second leading cause of death.

"In a young and generally healthy population, it's understandable this would be a concern – many millennials will know of friends and acquaintances who have either committed suicide or been impacted by those who have," said McConnell.

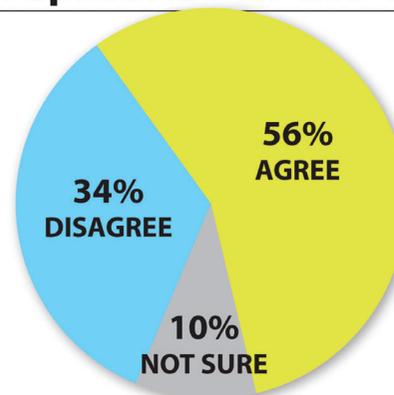
Suicide and mental illness have been taboo topics in many churches, McConnell said. In previous studies by LifeWay Research, two-thirds of Protestant pastors said they speak to their churches about mental illness once a year or less, and 65 percent of family members of someone with mental illness say churches should do more to talk about mental illness so the topic is not so taboo.

In recent years, some have begun speaking out. McConnell said Pastor Rick Warren, of Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, Ca., has spoken publicly about the suicide death of his son Matthew, and church leader Frank Page released a book about his daughter Melissa's suicide.

"For too long, many Christians have viewed mental illness as a character flaw, rather than a medical condition," McConnell said. "It's encouraging to see the culture begin to change."

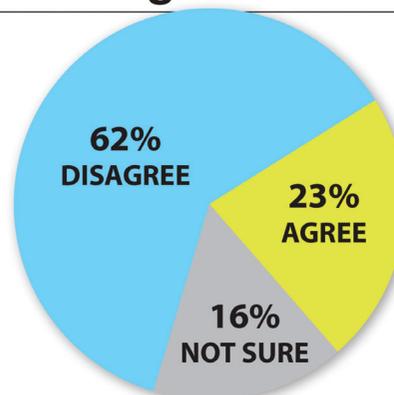
AMONG AMERICANS

Suicide has become an epidemic in the U.S.



AMONG AMERICANS

People who commit suicide go to hell



Note: Total does not equal 100% due to rounding.

The Watercooler

"Trump has made his living as a casino mogul in an industry that preys on the poor and incentivizes immoral and often criminal behavior. ... He's someone who has spoken in vulgar and harsh terms about women, as well as in ugly and hateful ways about immigrants and other minorities. I don't think this is someone who represents the values that evangelicals in this country aspire to."

– Russell Moore, ERLC

SPEAKING TO NPR's Jessica Taylor Sept. 13, Russell Moore, president of the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, candidly described his thoughts on Donald Trump, the current front-runner for the GOP nomination. Moore's statement cited Trump's moral and ethical record and proposed policies as incompatible with a conservative evangelical worldview.

"Romans 8:19 says, 'All creation is eagerly waiting for the sons of God to manifest.' They might be smokin', but they're waiting. They might be cussin', but they're waiting. They might be fighting with their wife or their husband, whoopin' their kids, but they're waiting. They need the gospel, too."

– Steve "Humble Me" North

SPEAKING to Nancy De Gennaro of dnj.com, Steve "Humble Me" North and David Manning, two hip-hop artists and music ministers based in Murfreesboro, Tenn., said they are using hip-hop to reach people for Jesus. "At the end of the day, we're just trying to get the truth to them. ... And people respect us because we're real. ... We've been there," Manning said.

OCTOBER 4, 2015

Have you ever doubted God's plan? Maybe when struggles come and what you thought was His plan crumbles and crashes around you? In Noah's day, it might have seemed that God's plan of redemption was crashed on the rocks of human sinfulness, that He had given up on the crown of His creation. Judgment for sin was necessary, but it seemed like everyone was mixed up in it, that the entire world was doomed. This is not the ending I would have chosen. Fortunately for us humans, it wasn't the ending God had chosen either.

The story of redemption continued through one family saved from the catastrophic flood. As is often the case, deliverance came when things seemed most hopeless. Noah and his family had been on the ark for an entire year, with no end in sight. The floating barn finally came to rest on a mountain (Gen. 8:4), and it was finally time to open the door and leave what must have become a terrible place to live.

"Then God spoke" (Gen. 8:15).

It's important to note that throughout the story, God was right there with His people. The transcendent Creator of the universe, wholly other, was right there, immanent, present with His creation. He never left. In Genesis 8, God called Noah's family out of the ark and into a brand-new world. The judgment by water had passed, and it was time to enter into a covenant with the humans.

For the humans' part, they would fulfill their role of filling the earth (Gen. 9:7). God's part was not as simple: No matter what, judgment would never again come by flood (Gen. 9:8-17). No matter how people rebel, no matter how much they deserve the judgment they would receive, God would see His plan of redemption to the end.

Though Noah is described as righteous, and acted in faith to follow God, he didn't always act rightly. God's choice of Noah as the one through whom the human race would survive was one of grace – one person, one family, chosen in spite of themselves.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

A fresh start

GENESIS 8:15-22; 9:1,11-16

Matt Parker
Arkadelphia

wife met us at the driveway and teased me by telling me how good my shiny motorcycle looked broken down in the back of an old rusty truck. The inside ended up being more important!

God is concerned more about our character than our comfort. He uses the good and the bad to shape us into the people He wants us to be – from the inside out.

Knowing that all things that God allows to enter our lives are not necessarily good things sometimes makes us question God. If we are honest, we might say that we love God, but sadly we find ourselves not really trusting Him. How would a loving God allow "that" to happen to me?

The remainder of Romans 8 reinforces God's love for us and His intention to never leave us alone and vulnerable to the damaging effects of the world. God is perfectly good and committed to us. Ephesians 2:10 calls us God's "masterpiece" in progress. He won't quit. He won't stop. We are loved!

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

God's promise of victory

ROMANS 8:28-39

Rick Melick
Cotter

One of the most misquoted passages in the entire Bible, Romans 8:28, brings great comfort when applied correctly. Unfortunately, it can be equally damaging when misunderstood. "All things work together for good," but all things are not good things!

God uses all things – the good and the bad – to work together in our lives for good. But good is often misunderstood.

Romans 8 uses the word "good" in a sense that is contrary to the world's definition of "good." In short, the good that God is concerned with is the work that He is doing within us making us spiritually and morally right.

When I bought my first Harley-Davidson, I could not afford to make the bike run well and look good at the same time. So I chose to spend my money on chrome and wax. I made it look great on the outside, rather than ensuring mechanical reliability and performance. One Saturday afternoon, my motorcycle broke down. A friend helped me load it into the back of his pickup truck and drove me home. My

Dying is the event that humans fear the most! We spend millions of dollars trying to prevent it and countless hours trying to prolong our biological lives. While the process of death is sometimes unpleasant, for the believer in Christ, the product of death is always magnificent.

The Apostle Paul said, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Phil. 1:21).

After the fall of mankind through the choices of Adam and Eve, we were cursed. The Bible says that everyone since Adam and Eve is born sinful and "the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23). An additional consequence from the fall is the internal sense that we are destined for something else. It brings a restlessness of the soul. We are created for something different. We have a built-in longing for home.

My wife and I recently bought a new house that sits on 20 acres of land. I built a wood rail fence with a gate across our driveway. My wife decided to put solar lights on each of the fence posts.

When driving home after a long day of ministry, I can see the distant glow of the lights from the gate to my house. As I get closer, the light gets brighter, and I become excited because I am almost home!

As we journey through our lives, the closer we get to our final destination, the more we sense the glow of our heavenly home. Excitement builds within us

as we reach the place where the rule of Christ is unhindered and we will enjoy the eternal absence of death, mourning, crying and pain (Rev. 21:4). Revelation 21 says all things will be made new. Wrongs will be set right, and we will finally know what it is like to be exactly where we belong.

For the Christian, death never happens. When we arrive at the end of our time on this earth and we breathe our last, we immediately awaken to the reality of heaven and see Jesus Christ, with His arms outstretched, saying, "Welcome Home! You were good and faithful."

OCTOBER 11, 2015

Sometimes people tell me, "I used to think I was called to ministry."

These words are usually used in a conversation with a person feeling miserable in their chosen occupation. They feel they have ignored their calling in favor of what would make money in the short-term. Maybe they actually have a calling to ministry, or maybe not, but someone who is not living within their giftedness and calling will never find the level of fulfillment and joy in their work that only God can bring.

Remember the command and purpose that God gave Adam and repeated to Noah – "Be fruitful and multiply," and, "Fill the earth" (Gen. 1:28; 9:1). Humans were supposed to be God's representative rulers of the earth, managing creation well, and they were to fill the earth with their offspring. What they did instead was gather into one place and try to build a tower to reach God (Gen. 11:1-9). The people were in the region of Babylon, Assyria and modern-day Iraq. They were in eastern Mesopotamia, where archaeologists

have found ancient temples called "ziggurats." Maybe the tower was an early ziggurat. They rejected their calling to be God's representatives "to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8) and sought to reach the realm of the gods, presumably to achieve the level of godhood for themselves.

Presented as if He didn't know already, the author describes God in Genesis 11 as coming down and being surprised, though this must be the literary device of anthropomorphism, giving human characteristics to God. The testimony of Scripture is that He is the God who sees, the One who has not abandoned His Creation but is all-knowing and everywhere-present. And He lovingly stirred the pot, mixing up the languages of the people

so that their focus and efforts might shift to fulfilling their purpose. And through this scattering of the nations, God continued His plan of redemption.

Sometimes God stirs the pot in our lives to draw our attention back to our calling, being His representatives to the nations.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Scattered!

GENESIS 11:1-9

Matt Parker
Arkadelphia

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

God's promise of a new home

REVELATION 21:1-8

Rick Melick
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