



Messengers gather at the 2012 Arkansas Baptist State Convention Annual Meeting Oct. 30-31 at First Baptist Church, Cabot. For more stories about the annual meeting, see pages 6-11. Photo by Jessica Vanderpool

Ark. vols begin DR feeding in NY

FARMINGDALE, N.Y. – Arkansas Baptist disaster relief volunteers have served about 30,000 meals in the aftermath of the devastation caused by Hurricane Sandy in the New York City region.

As of press time, all Southern Baptist units deployed to New York – including Arkansas – had to curtail operations, or “stand down” in disaster relief lingo, temporarily due to a nor’easter storm in the area that carried with it high winds and freezing precipitation. Many Northeast residents were still without power as the new storm hit the area.

Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC) Feeding Unit 1 – capable of feeding 25,000-plus meals a day – was activated Nov. 1 as part of a multistate deployment to the Empire State. Southern Baptist Convention disaster relief was requested to serve up to 600,000 meals a day if needed, according to Baptist Press.

Twenty-four volunteers left Nov. 2 from First Baptist Church, Marion, on the church’s bus dubbed “God send,” said Robby Tingle, ABSC missions ministries team leader.

ABSC feeding operations and a shower unit from Geyer

See **RELIEF** page 11

Meet at FBC, Cabot

Messengers focus ‘NOW’ at annual meeting

CABOT – Messengers to the 159th Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC) Annual Meeting Oct. 30-31 approved a 2013 Cooperative Program (CP) budget of \$22 million, elected officers and passed several resolutions.

NOW was theme of the meeting, which was held at First Baptist Church, Cabot, where convention president Greg Addison serves as pastor. Addison was elected to a second term at the meeting.

The annual meeting was attended by 634 registered messengers, which

is down slightly from the 687 messengers attending the 2011 meeting in Little Rock and from the 761 messengers attending the 2010 meeting in Jonesboro. Convention staff only records registered messengers and not visitors or guests.

In addition to Addison’s re-election as convention president,

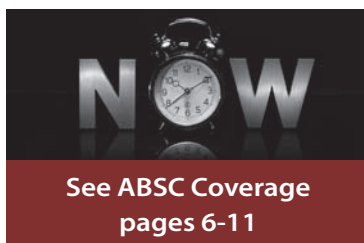
other officers re-elected were Ken Jerome, interim pastor of First Baptist Church, Jacksonville, first vice president; and Matt Pryor, pastor of First Baptist Church, Wooster, second vice president. All three ran unopposed.

Messengers approved six resolutions at the meeting, including resolutions opposing the Arkansas Medical Marijuana Act, a resolution in support of the

biblical definition of marriage and a resolution expressing gratitude and prayer for members of the armed forces.

Other resolutions included recognizing Emil Turner, ABSC executive director who is retiring after 16 years of service to Arkansas Baptists; a resolution expressing appreciation to the ABSC convention staff, and Greg Addison, staff and members of First Baptist Church, Cabot, for hosting the annual meeting, and a

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Profiles in faith:

Hope police chief serves God, fellow man

Editor’s Note: Following is the first in a series of stories about Arkansas Baptists who serve in secular jobs, seeking to make Jesus Christ known in their sphere of influence.

Mary Burns
Arkansas Baptist News

HOPE – Hope police Chief J.R. Wilson was disillusioned with matters of faith in his high school days.

“I came to the conclusion that God was not real,” said Wilson, 50, a member of First Baptist Church, Hope. “He was like Santa Clause or the Easter Bunny. I arrived at this decision because church just didn’t make sense to me. We spoke of love and unity, but we were the most segregated place I knew.”

Wilson said one of his friends invited him to a revival at his church, promising him there would be plenty of girls in attendance.

“You have to understand that Columbus (near Texarkana) was a small farming community with no girls my age,” said Wilson. “My friends’ evangelistic technique of luring a boy to a revival with the thought of pretty girls worked.”

During the revival, Wilson didn’t pay attention “at all” to the preacher’s message. Instead, his neck was straining from left to right, scoping

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Hope police Chief J.R. Wilson.

ABSC

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resolution on Christian citizenship and civic participation.

Full text of resolutions approved by messengers is available at www.arkansasbaptist.org/2012/resolutions.

Miscellaneous business included a motion by Brad Coble, a messenger from Calvary Baptist Church, Benton, who asked the convention to recognize Roy Fish, retired professor of evangelism at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. Fish died Sept. 10.

"I thank God for his influence on my life," Coble told messengers. Addison asked messengers approve the motion, which they did with a resounding "amen." Coble was then asked to pray.

Other miscellaneous business included a motion to dedicate the 2012 Annual of the ABSC to Frank Shell and L.B. Jordan, both former pastors, associational missionaries and longtime leaders in Arkansas Baptist life who passed away this year.

2013 budget approved

The ABSC budget of \$22 million is slightly higher than the \$21.4 million 2012 operating budget.

The budget includes \$9,395,389 (42.71 percent) for Southern Bap-

tist Convention (SBC) causes and \$12,469,611 (56.68 percent) for missions and ministries in Arkansas.

The SBC portion includes an increase of \$201,332 (0.2 percent) above this year's allocation, the first such increase in a five-year plan to increase the SBC portion by 1 percent.

The convention is currently completing a similar five-year plan for 2008-2012.

Additionally, the 2013 CP budget will reflect the first year of the convention's revised budget formula approved by messengers at the 2011 annual meeting.

The approved recommendations set forth in the formula - which will be in effect for the 2013-17 budget years - increase the percentage of funds (total receipts) forwarded to the SBC and divide state budget surpluses with the SBC.

The convention's nominating committee report was approved with no challenges and no discussion.

The committee nominates people to serve on boards of ABSC entities and institutions.

Gary Hollingsworth, pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church, Little Rock, was elected president of the ABSC Executive Board. Mike McCauley, pastor of Bella Vista Baptist Church, Bella Vista, was elected first vice president.

The 2013 annual meeting will be held Oct. 29-30, 2013, at Cross Church in Rogers.

ACP launch a success

HUNDREDS of Arkansas Baptists stopped by the *Arkansas Baptist News* (ABN) booth at the annual convention meeting Oct. 30-31 in Cabot to pick up their free copies of *Arkansas Christian Parent* (ACP) magazine.

"We are thrilled to have received such positive feedback on this new publication," said Tim Yarbrough, editor.

Churches were asked to come to the annual meeting prepared to pick up the number of magazines they wanted to distribute.

"The response was overwhelming," said Yarbrough. "In fact, we distributed more than 13,000 copies at the convention alone."

ACP was designed to be used as an outreach tool, said Yarbrough.

"We encourage churches to strategically place them in their communities, such as places of business," Yarbrough said. "We also want churches to use them dur-

ing church visitation."

Yarbrough said copies are still available.

To request copies of ACP magazine for your church, call the ABN at 501-376-4791, ext. 5153, or toll-free at 800-838-2272; or email ABN@arkansasbaptist.org.

In addition messenger who visited the booth were given the opportunity to register for an iPad giveaway and other giveaways.

Winners of the Arkansas Baptist News (ABN) giveaways have been notified and will be announced in the Nov. 29 edition of the ABN.



HOPE

continued from page one

out all the females he would approach at the end of the service.

"As far as I was concerned, he was just another preacher speaking the same old garb about some fairy tale," Wilson said.

However, when the time came for the invitation, what started as an act of peer pressure, turned into a life-transformation for Wilson.

"Every person in that building went to the altar to pray," Wilson said. "I was not about to be the only person in the building that did not get up. When I knelt down and began my prayer, God's presence exploded in my mind and heart. I knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that the God I had been denying for the past few months was real and was confronting me. I began to weep like a baby. I didn't even care what the girls would think about me. At that moment I knew God was real and I believed in Him and loved Him."

After that night, Wilson's life began to change dramatically. He knew now what his own father had been trying to teach him "out on the farm."

"In the twinkling of an eye, everything changed," Wilson said. "I'll never forget my father asking me one day, 'What is wrong with you?'"

He meant this in a good way. My whole personality had changed overnight. It was the power and presence of God. It was my Damascus road."

Wilson struggled in his early days as a Christian with understanding his calling - wondering if God was calling him to become a pastor. He said he understands more fully now that the Lord's calling was simply to become more like Him.

"I no longer struggle with trying to understand it fully," Wilson said. "I merely try to be the person God has called His people to be."

Wilson has served as Hope chief of police since 2003. Though he said police work has been "in his blood since an early age," Wilson re-

ceived his Master of Divinity degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, as well as a Bachelor of Business Science degree, working in the business world, serving in ministry positions and even taking a position in the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) before returning to his hometown. Wilson still finds opportunities to utilize his ministerial training and stays very active in his church along with his wife, Barbara.

"Chief Wilson is a tremendous asset to both our church and community," said Mark Fischer, pastor of First Baptist, Hope. "He consistently demonstrates the love and spirit of Christ in a positive and

encouraging way. Recently, a young couple came to thank him for how he helped them during the week. This is not what you typically hear about a police chief."

The Arkansas Association of Chiefs of Police recently recognized Wilson as "Chief of the Year" during its annual convention meeting held in Rogers. Wilson serves as southwest regional vice president of the organization.

Wilson was nominated by his peers based on his level of dedication to the field of law enforcement.

The police chief, college class Sunday school teacher, fill-in pastor, prayer leader and husband credits all of his life accomplishments back to that day many years ago.

"The wonderful opportunities I have had throughout my life all stem from that day in 1978 when I came face to face with our heavenly Father in a small church in southwest Arkansas," said Wilson.

"I am here to declare that my God is real. Sometimes I question. What do you expect? I am a trained investigator," he said. "But I rest in the simple truth that has guided me all this time, that no matter what circumstance I find myself, my heavenly Father is present with me, He loves me and He loves all other people too."

Mary Burns is the southwestern regional correspondent for the *Arkansas Baptist News*.



J.R. Wilson, a member of First Baptist Church, Hope, has been Hope police chief since 2003.

Voters reject medical marijuana proposal

LITTLE ROCK (BP) – Arkansas voters, by a narrow 51 percent majority, defeated a ballot measure on Nov. 6 that would have made their state the first in the South to legalize medical marijuana.

The Arkansas initiative was defeated by a narrower-than-expected margin, according to Jerry Cox, executive director of the Family Council Action Committee of Arkansas. The closeness was due in part to the massive amount of money spent by pro-marijuana groups and in part to the short time opposition groups had to mobilize, he told Baptist Press.

“The things that I think mattered most in this election were, first of all, a really strong grassroots effort on the part of organizations around the state like ours, but also like the chiefs of police, the sheriffs association, the state chamber of commerce, the Arkansas Medical Society, the Arkansas Pharmacists Association and even the governor (Democrat Mike Beebe), the attorney general (Democrat Dustin McDaniel) and elected officials,” Cox said. “That combined effort made the difference. If we had not had all those elements, then the measure probably would have passed.”

Marijuana advocates spent at least \$700,000 in the campaign, compared with less than \$50,000 spent to oppose the initiative, Cox

said. The disparity allowed proponents to purchase a large amount of advertising while opponents were forced to rely on media coverage of the issue to disseminate their message.

The opposition campaign began in force only 40 days prior to the election. Before that, opponents did not think the measure

would garner enough signatures to appear on the ballot. When it did, they asked the state Supreme Court to remove it from the ballot and expected a victory, arguing that its title was not complete,

did not reflect the scope and impact of the proposal and did not reflect clearly that the measure was against federal law. But the court ruled in September that the measure could appear on the ballot.

Some medical and law enforcement groups that came out against it were not able to take official votes among their organization until the last minute, Cox said. He speculated that another six to eight weeks of campaigning would have resulted in better organization among marijuana opponents.

The measure would have established “a system for the cultivation, acquisition and distribution of marijuana for qualifying patients through nonprofit medical marijuana dispensaries.”



To qualify, Arkansas residents would have had to obtain a doctor's note saying that marijuana would benefit them medically. Upon presenting such a note to the state's Department of Health, they would have received a card allowing them either to buy marijuana from authorized dispensaries or grow it themselves if they lived more than five miles from a dispensary.

Cox said some proponents of the measure were using it as a backdoor way to legalize marijuana.

“They did not write it for people who are sick with cancer or dying of other really bad diseases,” he said. “They wrote this measure so otherwise healthy people can claim that they have muscle spasms or pain or nausea and get a note from a doctor. And then from there they're able to grow their own marijuana at home and smoke as much as they want to.”

Southern Baptists played a key role in the defeat of medical marijuana, distributing flyers in their churches and mobilizing voters, according to Cox.

“Since Southern Baptists are the largest denomination in Arkansas, that was a huge factor in defeating this measure – the work done in the churches,” he said.

Going forward, medical marijuana advocates said they will first ask the state legislature to take up the issue. If that fails, they will attempt to get it on the ballot again in two years, the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* reported.

ABN Digest

Stories of interest to Arkansas Baptists

Romney evangelical support above Bush

WASHINGTON (BP) – Republican nominee Mitt Romney won a larger percentage of the evangelical vote than did John McCain in 2008 and even equaled that of George W. Bush's 2004 percentage, according to an exit poll data analysis by the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life. Romney received 79 percent of the white born-again/evangelical vote to McCain's 73 percent. President Obama, meanwhile, won 20 percent of that group this year compared to 26 percent in 2008. President Bush received 79 percent of support from white born-again/evangelical voters in 2004. The public exit poll data does not list how evangelicals of all races voted.

Guatemala earthquake response eyed by BGR

SAN MARCOS, Guatemala (BP) – Dozens of people are dead and hundreds homeless after a powerful earthquake hammered Guatemala's Pacific coast the morning of Nov. 7. Baptist Global Response partners are evaluating the damage and the need for a relief effort. So far, 71 people are known dead or missing and presumed dead and 620 people have taken refuge at government shelters in San Marcos and Quetzaltenango, reported David Brown, who with his wife Jo, directs Baptist Global Response work in the Americas.

Marijuana legalized in Washington, Colorado

DENVER (BP) – Colorado and Washington became the first states to legalize the recreational use of marijuana Nov. 6, while voters in Oregon rejected a similar proposal. Barrett Duke, a Southern Baptist ethicist, expressed disappointment that adults in two states used their votes to make marijuana more accessible to youth. “Marijuana is a very dangerous drug. Its use cannot be effectively regulated,” Duke, vice president for public policy and research at the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, told Baptist Press Nov. 7. Amendment 64 in Colorado passed with well over 50 percent of the vote, *The Denver Post* reported. The measure passed by a similar margin in Washington, *The Seattle Times* reported.

New ABCHomes ministry assists single mothers

Stella Prather,
ABCHomes

JONESBORO – Arkansas Baptist Children's Homes and Family Ministries (ABCHomes) is expanding its ministry to meet the needs of single mothers and their children in the Jonesboro area.

A groundbreaking ceremony was held Nov. 5 for the ABCHomes Family Care Home on the grounds of Central Baptist Church, Jonesboro, in memory of A.H. “Buck” Rusher. Rusher was born and raised in Brinkley.

The Home will assist single-parent mothers and their children through residential group care, mentoring, financial planning, teaching, counseling and referral to valuable community resources.

The Rusher family donated funding for the construction of the cottage, while Central Baptist Church donated the land to ABCHomes for the ministry.

In attendance at the groundbreaking ceremony were more than 50 community supporters and leaders, as well as many members of the Rusher family. Addressing the crowd, Jonesboro Mayor Harold Perrin praised the new project,



From left: John Ross, ABCHomes development officer; Archie Mason, pastor of Central Baptist Church, Jonesboro; Robin and Debbie Rusher Nix; Gus Rusher; David Perry, ABCHomes executive director; Pam Rusher; Jim and Holly Rusher Wells, and Albert and Betty Rusher.

adding that a home of this nature is “an area we've been looking at and trying to cover through our vision 2030. And this facility will specialize in that.”

Pam Rusher, Buck's widow, said that her husband would be proud of a home where many mothers will not only receive great care but will also hear the gospel message of Jesus Christ.

The focus of the ministry is on long-term quality-of-life improvements, not on temporary solutions, stressed David Perry, ABCHomes

executive director.

“The program will seek to restore families with hope, comfort and shelter while they locate the resources they need to move toward successful independent living,” said Perry, adding, “Relief and assistance will be provided to single mothers from all walks of life so they can focus on resolving their individual crisis and temporary family instability. While the mother works toward setting goals with the guidance of

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

This could be our moment to impact eternity

It's easy to get a feeling of doom and gloom following the nationwide elections held Nov. 6.

Citizens of the United States are voting in support of a more liberal social agenda and are expecting more support from their government than perhaps ever before in U.S. history.

One thing is for certain – our country is changing dramatically before our eyes. But conversely, it is also true that the hope of our



PRESSING ON

Tim Yarbrough

nation never was and never will be in a political party or politician. Our hope is found only in Jesus Christ. God is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow. He knew this moment would come in our country before the beginning of time.

It's up to evangelical Christians to step up and respond to

challenges that lie ahead.

Here are a few takeaways I gleaned from the recent election that all Christian evangelicals need not miss.

We were reminded vividly that we live in a fallen world. Perhaps never before has the reality that we live in a deeply fallen world been more evident to Christian evangelicals living in the United States than in the recent election. I've included in this column a screen shot of alerts on my iPhone as I started my day the morning following the election (left).

You may not be able to read it clearly, but included in the alerts from CNN are: "Marijuana will become legal in Colorado and Washington state for all uses." "Same-sex



marriage is to become legal in Maine and Maryland." "Democrat Rep. Tammy Baldwin will become the first openly gay U.S. senator."

Many people don't believe the way we do. I mentioned in my Oct. 18 column a new study that says never before have so few people in the United States identified themselves as Protestants. Additionally, the study said nearly one in five Americans now identify themselves

as "atheist, agnostic or nothing in particular," and one-third of young people age 18 to 22 are religiously unaffiliated. Yes, we are beginning to see a radical shift in our country's religious makeup – and they are voting in increasing numbers.

Our country is experiencing a dramatic moral shift. The United States continues to change morally, and it will continue as people become less religious, seek pleasure, comfort and look to the government for hope and to improve their lives.

The call of Christ to save our fallen world from sin has never been greater, as it is for believers in Jesus to step up boldly and share the good news of the gospel.

This could be our moment in history that saves literally millions of people from an eternity in hell.

How will we respond?

Tim Yarbrough is editor of the Arkansas Baptist News. Contact him at tim@arkansasbaptist.org.

'Hungry for More'

by Kandy Persall, Westbow Press, 2012

Kandy Persall and her husband Mark spent a total of 20 years in Asia with the International Mission Board (IMB) and are still working with the IMB in a different capacity. My husband Bill and I were privileged to work several years in Taiwan with them.

Each chapter of Persall's book, "Hungry for More: Feasting through the Word," has a Bible-reading assignment followed by anecdotes taken from her diary during her time as a missionary in Taiwan. Devotional thoughts are given on certain topics related to God's Word, and the chapter ends with

an appropriate prayer.

Some of the 28 chapter titles include "The Life in the Word," "The Revelation of the Word," "The Provision of the Word," "Viewing Others through the Word,"

"Discernment of the Word," "Waiting on the Word" and "Purification and the Word."

To get

the full benefit of these studies, one must have a Bible in hand, for there are many verses referred to in each chapter. I teach a Bible study on Sunday mornings in a Chinese church, and when I have to be gone, I have my substitute teach one of the chap-

BOOK REVIEW

LaVeta Sergeant
First Baptist Church
Fayetteville



of everyone who is 'Hungry for More,' and secondly, that it will create a deep hunger for His Spirit in the multitudes of those that don't have a spiritual hunger yet."

Persall continues to struggle with what little bites we Americans take when

we open the Bible, and prays that "Hungry for More" will increase the appetite of many.

Letters to the editor

The Arkansas Baptist News welcomes letters to the editor of 300 words or less on topics and concerns to Arkansas Baptists (see policy below for submission guidelines). Email letters to tim@arkansasbaptist.org.



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Member of the Association
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Tim Yarbrough, editor

Leah Fender, assistant editor

Jessica Vanderpool, assistant editor/
office manager

Becky Hardwick, business manager

Nelle O'Bryan, advertising representative

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Letters may be edited for style. A letters policy statement is available on request. Opinions expressed in letters are those of the writer alone, and publication should not be considered an endorsement.

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Family Matters

Read Scripture

What do we read today, Dad?" Those words were music to my ears when my boys asked what Bible passage to read immediately after they crawled out of bed. I don't always hear those words. Some days they struggle to get up at all and sometimes other priorities replace Bible reading.



Phillips

We've been on a long journey to cultivate a desire in our children for reading and applying Scripture consistently. Paul's encouragement in 2 Timothy 3:14-17 provides a motivating example.

Set an example by reading the Bible consistently as a parent. Let them observe you reading Scripture. If they see your priorities, then they will be more likely to make it a priority in their life.

Consistently read shorter passages. You and your children will benefit from reading smaller passages several days a week as compared to reading one large passage one day a week.

Read the Bible to your preschool children and read the Bible with your elementary aged children until they can comfortably read alone.

Incorporate Bible reading into your normal family rhythm. Choose times when you are most likely to be consistent. We focus on consistency in the mornings Monday through Friday and then reflect or catch up on weekends.

Pray Scripture back to God. Incorporate words and phrases from your Bible reading into your prayer time.

Talk about what you are learning and relate Bible verses and stories to issues that you and your children encounter. This will help your children understand the Bible is relevant and practical.

Utilize a Bible reading plan to help you read Scripture together. Start by reading through the New Testament.

Recite Bible memory verses together. Scripture memory will help your children meditate on Scripture beyond their daily reading time.

Encourage children to read the Bible. Affirm them when they read it individually without prompting.

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

Forgiveness: There is no choice

Paul Gilmour's bike was stolen. The thief cut the lock and rode away. He was later caught, wrote a note of apology and sent Paul \$10 to buy a new lock. The bike was returned undamaged. Gilmour said, "I have no choice but to forgive this guy." I agree with him, but I wonder about his reasons for forgiving the thief. Was it because he got his bike back and a note of apology?

Ann Marie Hagan's father was murdered. She tried to intervene and was attacked. The murderer used an axe. She later talked with the murderer and forgave him. In a recent interview, she said she forgave because she began to see the struggles the murderer faced as a child. Was it because this man was traumatized as a child that he was worthy of forgiveness?

Forgiveness is a good thing. And I doubt that we ought to quibble about motives when it comes to forgiving those who have hurt us. But believers do not forgive people because they are repentant or because of difficult circumstances in the lives of the offenders. We forgive because Christ has forgiven us.

Church members don't realize it, but pastors and church staff members are often faced with the need to forgive people in the church. A church member's personality can offend even though that person never real-

izes it. A pastor's wife can be hurt by unkind or even thoughtless comments about her husband or children.

The termination of a pastor can hurt for years. The unwillingness to compensate a pastor or church staff member appropriately can cause resentment. ("We can't afford to pay more" is no defense unless your members aren't tithing.)

We "religious professionals" know that we should forgive, and yet, we often prefer to act as if the slights, rudeness – and sometimes the meanness – do not bother us. Ignoring an offense is not the same as forgiveness.

Years ago while studying forgiveness, I engaged in a liberating exercise. Alone with God, my Bible and a notebook, I asked Him to reveal to me every person I needed to forgive. I began to review my childhood, my teen years and my college, seminary and ministry experiences. God began to show me that I had tried to ignore offenses rather than forgive

them. Working through a list, I forgave the people whom He brought to my mind one by one. It was a great experience for me.

We forgive not because they repent, not because they apologize, not because they deserve it, but because Christ has forgiven us. Like Paul Gilmour, I have no choice but to forgive.

Emil Turner is executive director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention.



A PASTOR'S HEART

Emil Turner



Purposeful planning

Most of us are planners by nature. We plan our day to help insure we stay on track with what needs to be achieved. We plan the details of a trip to increase the probability that everything will work out smoothly related to what we want to accomplish on that trip. An organization plans strategically to know how to best utilize resources and to increase the probability of achieving its vision from a maximum impact standpoint.

Planning increases the odds of purposely achieving an individual's or an organization's objectives. Planning is being on the "offense" side of life, purposefully forging ahead, versus being on the "defense" side in trying to simply survive. Planning involves good stewardship of our time and maximizing our impact.

Estate and charitable planning should be no different. Such planning allows us to be good stewards and maximize our impact. We should prayerfully and purposefully plan our objectives: What do we want to achieve before we pass away one day? Whether it is neglect because people do not want to

think about dying or simply procrastination, many fail to plan for potentially the most important stewardship decision of their lives by not having the necessary estate documents in place. For most individuals, estate plans reflect the distribution of the majority of life's work and savings. Thoughtful planning related to distributions to family and ministries is simply good stewardship with the material possessions that God has given each of us.

Estate and charitable planning allows one to reflect upon her or his objectives, which often involve personal values. Those values may be helping family, participating in specific kingdom-related causes, helping in community efforts and/or assisting in other areas. Such planning allows one to leave a legacy that reflects one's values.

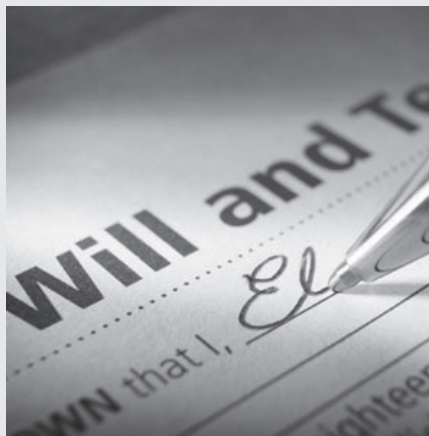
Without prayerfully and purposefully planning our estate and charitable distributions, we will likely miss out on opportunities to make a maximum impact with our possessions when we pass away. May we purposefully plan and leave a meaningful

legacy for those we leave behind.

Jeff Steed is vice president of the Arkansas Baptist Foundation.

FINANCIAL TIMES

Jeff Steed
Arkansas Baptist Foundation



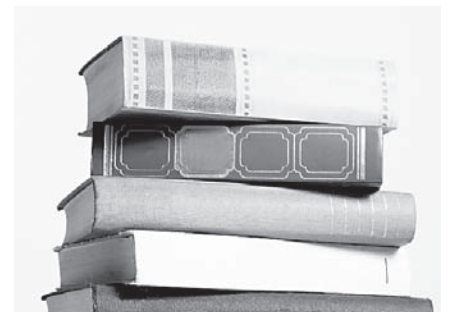
Read any good books lately?

The Arkansas Baptist News (ABN) invites pastors, other church staff and members of Arkansas Baptist churches to submit reviews of religion-related books they have read.

Preferably, the book review should be no more than 350 words

and should be about a book released in the past six months. Reviews may be edited for style and resubmitted to the author for revision.

Email your review to tim@arkansasbaptist.org, or call 800-838-2272 (toll-free in state) or 501-376-4791, ext. 5151.



Speakers encourage messengers to spread the gospel

CABOT – Messengers to the 159th Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC) Annual Meeting Oct. 30-31 were encouraged to preach the gospel NOW, the theme of this year's meeting. Speakers included Emil Turner, executive director of the ABSC; Charles Fowler, pastor of Germantown Baptist Church, Germantown, Tenn.; Gary Hollingsworth, senior pastor Immanuel Baptist Church, Little Rock; Greg Addison, president of the ABSC and pastor of First Baptist Church, Cabot; John McCallum, pastor of First Baptist Church, Hot Springs; and Michael Spradlin, president of Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary in Cordova, Tenn.

Below are experts from their messages.

Turner: Reaching the lost

Turner focused on Colossians 1:28-29, which says, "We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ. For this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me."

Turner explained that the passage deals with the burden and obligation Paul felt for the lost world.

Turner summed up his thoughts on the verses in four phrases: "only One," "Jesus is for everyone," "we have to 'go all out'" and "power within."

"God has given you supernatural power so that the people you know can be saved," Turner said, explaining, "There's only One, He's for everyone, we proclaim Him 'all out in God's power so more people go to heaven and less people go to hell.'"

Fowler: Unifying your church

As a new pastor, one might expect some disagreements between church members to arise when new on the scene, but how do you handle lingering pasts full of broken relationships, broken trust and divisions that are still affecting church members years after they took place?

That is the situation Fowler faced when he became senior pastor of Germantown Baptist Church in the summer of 2010. He shared how the church slowly mended and preached from Matthew 18.

"There were some pretty sad things that took place," Fowler said. "The enemy just really struck that church and plundered it – a church whose heart really beat for the gospel, one of the most mission-minded, most actively sending churches in this region, and then conflict came, and it was rough."

Fowler shared, "God took me on a journey ... where He reminded me that sin must always be confronted. We can't allow sin to occur and then let time pass long enough and hope it's dealt with. Sin is only dealt with when it's called out and confronted."

"My life will ever be changed by having walked through that (experience)," Fowler said.

"The Lord took me on this journey to show me the importance of reconciliation within the Body of Christ," Fowler said.

Hollingsworth: 'Live on the edge of urgency'

The word "now" presents "the question of urgency," Hollingsworth told messengers. Hollingsworth preached from 1 Peter 4:7-11 and addressed

the conference theme of NOW.

Though many things in life are not known for sure, Hollingsworth said the text in 1 Peter 4 gives a "sure event that is coming" – Jesus' return.

First, addressing verse 7, Hollingsworth said it suggests "now is the time to pray like you've never prayed before."

Second, verses 8-9 tell Christians that "now is the time to love like we have never loved."

Third, addressing verse 10, Hollingsworth said that "now is the time to serve like we have never served."

Finally, verse 11 tells Christians "now is the time to preach like we have never preached," he said, adding he believes the verse is a call for every Christian to fulfill the Great Commission but – since many in attendance were pastors – he wanted to remind them of the urgency and to preach with the anointing of God.

Addison: Fishing for men

Addison gave the president's message, speaking from Mark 1:16-20, which tells of Jesus calling fishermen to be His disciples. Noting the theme of the annual meeting – NOW – Addison pointed to how the disciples followed Jesus "immediately" when He called them.

He explained that Christ called "since" fishermen, referring to the latter part of Mark 1:16, which says, "They were casting a net into the sea, since they were fishermen."

Addison pointed out the men fished for a living, and they would understand what Jesus was saying.

He also explained how being a part of the ABSC can be an encouragement and help.

"When we come together, it helps your church become a 'catching church' in all kinds of different ways," he said.

Addison encouraged listeners to remember what it was like to lead their first person to the Lord, and he reminded them that Jesus provides everything needed for "fishing." Jesus, not an individual, is the One who saves.

Addison said pastors can follow this example in their churches, and that the state convention provides opportunities to take church members to where the lost are like Jesus did.

"If you don't decide today to drop your nets and to jump in what Jesus stirred your heart to do, the likelihood is you won't do it," he said, concluding, "We can catch fish, but we have to drop our nets and go. ... Join us in catching men."

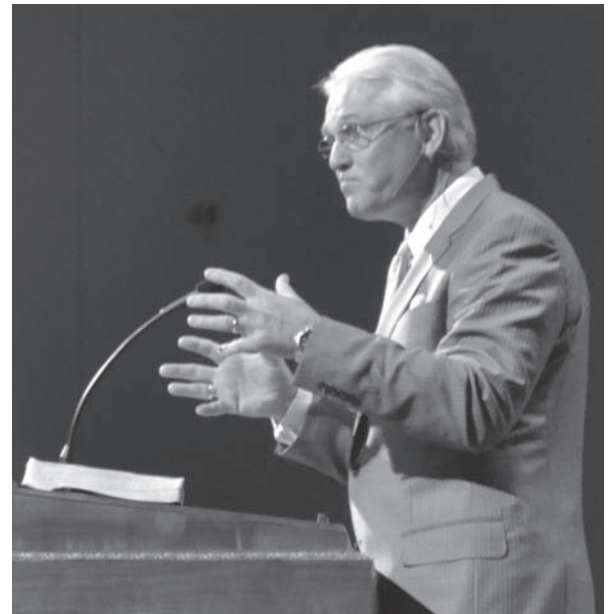
McCallum: 'Missions start with feet'

McCallum challenged messengers to "just walk" to share the gospel.

"The time is now to take the good news to the world," McCallum said. "Since you're walking anyway, take the good news with you as you go."

He preached from Romans 10:14-15, which tells of the beautiful feet of those who bring the good news.

"Walk across rooms and offices, walk across cities and states and countries with confidence – just walk to those in need of the good news and share it," said McCallum. "You're already walking from here to there for some reason anyway, so why not



Gary Hollingsworth, senior pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church, Little Rock, shares a message at the annual meeting.

take the good news with you as you go?"

He went on to say it doesn't really sound that hard, but yet many Christians don't share their faith.

He told messengers that if you're physically incapable of walking to share the good news, then there are other ways you can spread the good news – such as through praying or financially supporting others who are capable.

He concluded his message by saying that there are plenty of opportunities to just walk.

Spradlin: 'How rich is your God?'

Spradlin asked Arkansas Baptists, "How rich is your God?" Preaching from Romans 5, he asked messengers and guests their feelings about defeat.

"Imagine if your entire life crashed and burned around you, (that) every dream that you ever had just dissipated, that aspirations and lofty expectations came crumbling down in humiliating, dismal defeat.

"But enough about Razorback football!" exclaimed Spradlin to a roar of laughter from the crowd.

Continuing, Spradlin explained the Apostle Paul was one who had experienced crushing defeat.

"His entire life collapsed around him," Spradlin said.

After three days of darkness, Paul realized something "wonderful and dramatic" had happened to his life.

Spradlin explained that Paul was a religious man before he met Jesus Christ.

"Paul was killing in the name of Jesus and the name of God. Then he meets Jesus and had blood on his hands before Jesus," Spradlin said.

"Religion takes a person in the wrong direction and tells them that everything is all right," said Spradlin, adding that today our world isn't just combating pagan lostness, but combating religious lostness.

He said the bottom line is when we don't have Jesus we don't have anything.

The wonderful news is that God wants a relationship with us, said Spradlin.

"Because God desires that fellowship with us, He made a way" through the shed blood of Jesus, he said.

Concluding, Spradlin said the world is watching, so we should examine our habits and ask, "Does my entertainment or hobbies make me more or less like Jesus?"

Because ultimately, Spradlin explained, it's about our witness in the world and not about religion. It's about living for Jesus.



Charles Fowler, pastor of Germantown Baptist Church, Germantown, Tenn., shares his experience on building church unity.

Ministers preach during Pastors' Conference

CABOT – A variety of speakers encouraged messengers during the 2012 Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC) Pastors' Conference held Oct. 29 at First Baptist Church, Cabot, prior to the ABSC Annual Meeting Oct. 30-31.

Following are excerpts from their messages.

Bill Elliff

Bill Elliff, directional pastor at The Summit Church, North Little Rock, shared about encountering God during the morning session of the 2012 ABSC Pastors' Conference.

"Of all of the encounters that we need in the midst of our life there is one that we absolutely cannot afford to miss – and that is an encounter with Him (God)," Elliff said.

Basing his message in Exodus 3, Elliff spoke on Moses' encounter with God and how he responded.

Recognizing that some in attendance may have felt like they were in the wilderness, were inadequate, had missed their opportunities or had "messed up" so badly they felt God could not use them again, Elliff said, "I just want to tell you something this morning. God is waiting for you. And that's just His mercy, isn't it? I mean, that's just His compassion. That's His unbelievable grace that even in the wilderness, God is really waiting for us."

Elliff listed several aspects of Moses' response when he encountered God, including relaxing his hand.

"It's like God was saying, 'Moses, you know if you're going to walk with Me, it's going to be a little risky. I mean I'm going to ask you to do some things that are not natural. ... You got to remember that I am and you're not, and when I tell you something, relax your hand, let it go and do exactly what I'm telling you to do,'" Elliff said.

"What are you holding in your hand?" he asked the congregation.

Pointing to Exodus 3:7-8, Elliff noted one more thing. He explained God desires a person to encounter Him so others can encounter Him as well.

Bryan Loritts

"God calls us, not to lead great churches, ... (but) what gives you credibility to your ministry on Sunday is how you lead your and love your wife on Monday," Bryan Loritts told pastors and guests.

Loritts, lead pastor of Fellowship Memphis Church, Memphis, Tenn., shared a message from Eph. 5:25-33 titled "Marriage and Ministry."

The Memphis pastor said he wanted to talk to the men about the state of their homes.

Loritts told pastors their primary ministry should be to their wives.

"God was not calling you to be one with your church," he said. "He calls us to be one with our wives. Churches come and go. Orner deacons come and go. There's one thing God called you outside Him until death do you part. ... It is your wife. (If) you screw that up, you are not qualified to lead God's people."

Loritts compared marriage to grits. He said grits don't taste like much without something added to them like butter or shrimp. Referring to the passage from Ephesians, he said what Paul is saying is that marriage isn't much without Christ.

Pastors must thoroughly saturate their marriages with Christ, said Loritts, and he encouraged pastors to exercise humility, forgiveness and to build Christ-centered homes with their wives.

David Hankins

"The sermon this afternoon is for the faithful servant of God who has been in place, on duty, at his post for year after year, maybe even decade after decade, being faithful to God," said David Hankins, executive director of the Louisiana Baptist Convention.

"But if they were to say out loud what is in their heart, it would be this: 'I've about had it.'"

Hankins shared a message from 1 Kings 19:9-18. Hankins said even God's choice servants, like Elijah, sometimes need to catch their breath and get their second wind.

"He (Elijah) was not only physically exhausted, but spiritually spent," Hankins said. "His battle was not just with flesh and blood, but with the principalities in high places – the darkness of the world – he was in the midst of a spiritual battle, and he was simply exhausted."

And this is exactly how a lot of ministers feel today, Hankins preached. In order to get that second wind, Hankins offered three starting



Bryan Loritts, lead pastor of Fellowship Memphis Church, Memphis, Tenn., speaks at the 2012 Arkansas Baptist State Convention Pastors' Conference.

points.

First, he said to get in the presence of the Lord.

Second, get the perspective of the Lord.

Third, get on the pathway of the Lord.

Later in the day, Hankins shared a second message from Luke 5:1-11. The message, "Let's Go Back," focused on getting back to the heart of ministry.

Hankins told messengers they must first go back to the place of ministry.

"If you're going to catch fish (people), you (have) got to go where the fish (people) are."

He explained that when Jesus told Simon to let down the nets for a catch, Simon was not convinced they would catch anything, but since Jesus told him to let down the nets, Simon did so. To Simon and Peter's

surprise, the nets filled with fish.

"The fish didn't get into the nets because Jesus had been reading the latest issue of *Field and Stream*. ... This was a miracle," Hankins said. "The fish

got into the nets because they were in the presence of the Lord of the fish."

Christians need to do the same, said Hankins. They need to go back to the power of the Master.

"We need to introduce people to the power of the Master and under-

stand that He is the Lord of everything," Hankins said.

Jack Graham

Jack Graham, pastor of Prestonwood Baptist Church, Plano, Texas, and former Southern Baptist Convention president, spoke during the morning session of the 2012 ABSC Pastors' Conference.

Graham preached on keeping "ministry in balance," taking his text from 1 Timothy 4 and 1 Peter 5.

"If we're going to keep the flame lit in our lives, we must maintain balance," he said.

He spoke of how balance is important in a number of areas, such as in creation, in the body and in athletics. The Bible, too, is in balance, including an Old Testament and New Testament and a balance between law and grace, among other balanced elements.

He said imbalance in ministry causes burnout and "the flame goes down to a flicker."

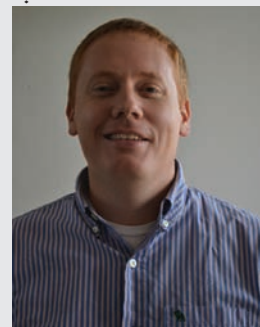
He read from 1 Timothy 4:16, which says, "Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers."

Graham said this shows that there should be a balance between personal life and public ministry and that people are to keep a constant focus on this. In turn, both they and those who hear them will be saved – which he said regards as sanctification.

He said to maintain balance between several elements, including one's private and public ministries, praying and preaching, courage and humility, and family and church.

Sermon recordings available

Recordings of sermons from the Arkansas Baptist State Convention Annual Meeting in Cabot are available for purchase through MasterSound Media. MasterSound may be contacted at 817-983-1995 or by visiting www.mastersoundmedia.com.



New Pastors' Conference president

Danny Smith, pastor of Cross Point Baptist Church, Greenbrier, was elected president of the 2012 Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC) Pastors' Conference during its meeting held Oct. 29 at First Baptist Church, Cabot.

Turner recognized for service at ABSC

CABOT – The Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC) Executive Committee, Operating Committee, team leaders and Thomas Hammond, member of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Executive Committee, recognized retiring ABSC Executive Director Emil Turner during the 2012 ABSC Annual Meeting Tuesday evening, Oct. 30.

Hammond said Turner talks cooperation, but more than talking, he lives it.

“The churches that he (Turner) pastored all experienced record baptisms,” Hammond said.

Hammond said that the average ratio of baptisms in the churches Turner pastored was 13:1 and that the national average is 19:1.

“That tells you that he has an evangelistic heart, but not just a heart for the local community, but also for the nation and the world because not only did they go out and share the gospel, but they enabled others to do the same by giving to the Cooperative Program,” Hammond said. “The churches he pastored averaged 15 percent of their undesignated funds to the Cooperative Program, and the last church he served designated 20 percent.”

Turner has served the ABSC for more than 16 years.

“That’s a lot of miles, that’s a lot of sermons, that’s a lot of tears, a lot of prayers, that’s a lot of times of sharing your faith, being out late, listening and encouraging pastors, blessing them (pastors), and so it is my privilege, on behalf of Dr. Frank Paige and the Executive Committee of your Southern Baptist Convention, to present to you (Turner) this resolution of appreciation.”

Hammond then gave Turner the framed resolution and said it “spells out the amazing accomplishments

that God has done through His servant Dr. Emil Turner.”

After presenting the resolution of appreciation to Turner, messengers gave Turner a standing ovation that lasted for nearly a full minute.



Jason Noel (right), president of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC) Executive Board and pastor of East Side Baptist Church, Paragould, recognizes Emil Turner.

“In my tenure of serving the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, you have been good to me and to Mary (Turner’s wife),” Turner said. “We believe that the church is what God uses, and the church, working with other churches, reaches the world.”

Turner went on to say he has made a lot of mistakes over the years – such as being a smart aleck, answering before listening, changing directions too quickly – but said that the one thing he did right over the years is hire well.

“I am grateful to have worked with such great people,” Turner said. “I have been the beneficiary of their skills, gifts and love for the Lord Jesus Christ. Thank you so much.”

Jason Noel, president of the ABSC Executive Board and pastor of East Side Baptist Church, Paragould, then introduced a video to honor Turner. The video is available for viewing at www.arkansasbaptist.org/video.

“When Dr. Turner announced his retirement, we immediately knew that we wanted to recognize him and we wanted to express our gratitude to him for his service to our state convention, but we did not just want it to be just the Executive Board. We wanted Arkansas Baptist to have an opportunity to express their gratitude,” Noel said.

The video featured Jimmie Sheffield, retired associate executive director and interim pastor of Cullendale Baptist Church, Camden;

Clint Ritchie, pastor of First Baptist Church, Hampton, and chairman of Convention Nominating Committee; Clay Hallmark, pastor of First Baptist Church, Marion, past president of ABSC and past president of Executive Board; Gary Watkins, retired pastor, former pastor of Turner in Bowling Green, Ky.; R.E. Clark, associational missionary for Northwest Baptist Association, Bentonville; Billy Kite, retired associational missionary, interim pastor of Second Baptist Church, Russellville, and chairman of the search committee that called Turner; Don Moore, retired executive director, interim pastor of First Baptist Church, Dumas; Melvin York, pastor of First Baptist Church Des Arc, former Executive Board member; and Rex Horne, president of Ouachita Baptist University in Arkadelphia and Turner’s former pastor.

At the conclusion of the video, Noel presented Turner with a certificate that recognized his service on behalf of Tom Elliff and the Interna-

tional Mission Board.

Noel also presented a framed letter written to Turner by Les Miles, head football coach at Louisiana State University, where Turner attended college.

Noel also presented Turner with a fly fishing rod and reel from the ABSC Executive Committee for Turner to enjoy in his retirement.

“There’s an agreement that goes along with it though. We expect to see lots (of pictures) of fish on Facebook as a result of this gift,” Noel joked.

Turner was also presented with a gift box with the inscription “More people in heaven and fewer people in hell.”

“You (Turner) have made an indelible mark on our lives ... and there is a room full of Arkansas Baptists who would concur, ... but the thing that you taught us the most is to love Jesus and to love lost people and we want you to know that we deeply love you and we thank God for your influence on our lives,” Noel said.

HOMES

continued from page 3

dedicated and supportive staff, she lives in a comfortable residential setting with her children.”

The 7,000 square-foot Home will house up to seven mothers and their children and will include live-in case managers. The Home will employ a staff of three.

Agency staff will offer supportive counsel for every mother and child. Assistance will be provided in goal setting, budgeting, parenting, homemaking, spiritual growth and relationship building.

While some ministries to mothers and children are available in central Arkansas, the ABCHomes Home will be unique in Arkansas, where the need is great,

said Perry.

According to a report by the Single Parent Scholarship Foundation, nearly one in five Arkansas families are led by single parents, of which 80 percent are single mothers. An estimated 43 percent of single-parent families were officially below the poverty line (2008-10 American Community Survey) in 2010.

Perry said many of these mothers have previously had nowhere to turn.

“ABCHomes views Family Care as a means to keep children with their mothers together in a safe environment while at the same time promoting self-sufficiency for these families. It is also a neat way to share the love of Christ in word and in deed,” he said.

For information on the Home visit www.abchomes.org.

Stella Prather is director of communications for ABCHomes.

STAFF WANTED

Arkansas Baptist Children's Homes and Family Ministries

■ **Area Director** for the Area Office, Fayetteville, Ark. This full-time position will provide individual, marital and family counseling, as well as supervision of a small emergency shelter for abused, abandoned or neglected children. Applicants must have or be able to obtain an Arkansas professional license as a: Licensed Professional Counselor, Licensed Associate Counselor, Licensed Marriage & Family Therapist, Licensed Associate Marriage & Family Therapist or a Licensed Certified Social Worker. For additional information, contact Charles Flynn, 501.376.4791, ext. 5167 or cflynn@abchomes.org.

■ **Case manager** for the Baptist Home for Children in Monticello, Ark. Case managers must hold a bachelor's degree in a human services field or a bachelor's degree and two years work experience in a human services field. Contact Randy Luper 870.367.5358 or rluper@abchomes.org; P.O. Box 427, Monticello, AR 71657.

■ **Houseparent couples** for the Boys Ranch, Harrison, Ark. These full-time positions include salary, medical insurance, life insurance and paid leave. Contact: Boys Ranch, Bill VonderMehden 870.741.5784 or bvondermehden@abchomes.org.

www.abchomes.org



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2012 Thanksgiving Offering



Arkansas Baptist agencies, institutions report

CABOT – Arkansas Baptist agencies and institutions provided messengers an update on their activities and accomplishments in the past year during the Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC) Annual Meeting held Oct. 30-31 at First Baptist Church, Cabot.

Ouachita – student success

The best way to tell the success story of Ouachita Baptist University in Arkadelphia is through the stories of its graduates and their work, Rex Horne, university president, told messengers and guests.

Horne shared about Amy York, a 2009 graduate from Dallas.

“She came with dreams of being a performer in the theater. As a sophomore, she went on a mission trip to India organized through our Pruet School of Christians Studies,” said Horne. “There, she discovered a love for the nations and came back to us to add a major in missions.”

Horne said the Hickingbotham School of Business recently sent a team to serve in Honduras. Students serving in the country are developing a website and a business plan for carpenters.

“Our students – past, present and future – will be difference-makers,” Horne exclaimed. “Thank you for your support through the Cooperative Program.”

New Williams president reports

Newly elected Williams Baptist College president Thomas Jones used his report to introduce himself to convention-goers, pointing to the impact the state and ministries of Arkansas Baptists have had on shaping his life and ministry.

“The first 13 years of my life were enriched – you might say engulfed – by the ministries of Arkansas Baptists ... going back to my birth,” said Jones.

“In 1956, my brother and I made big news in the state. We were among four sets of twins born in one night at the old Baptist hospital in Little Rock.”

Jones shared how his father, the late Don Jones, had pastored several Baptist churches around Arkansas, and how his mother, Helen, is still a member of Bellaire Baptist Church in Dermott.

He thanked Jerol Swaim, former Williams president, for his “steady leadership” and the “diligent work of the entire college community” prior to him taking the helm of the college in July.

Jones said Williams’ reputation has grown over the years alongside the construction of new buildings on campus.

“(We are) clearly valued and respected in our region and by the churches of our convention,” he said, adding, “We are a top tier institution in the college rankings of the *U.S. News & World Report*, ... a position the college has maintained for several years now.”

Additionally, the college has diversified its majors and now offers 25 majors and preprofessional programs, Jones said.

In sports, Jones pointed to the success of the Williams’ ladies softball team in winning the American Midwest Conference Championship and their two of three wins in the national softball tournament.

Finally, Jones illustrated the passion Williams’ students have for Christ – pointing to the activities for former students to start a new church in the Argenta area of North Little Rock.

Arkansas Baptist News

Tim Yarbrough, editor of the *Arkansas Baptist News* (ABN), announced the availability of the new *Arkansas Christian Parent* magazine to all messengers at the annual meeting.

“It is a completely new publication provided

free in any quantity to your church. Pastors, please consider providing it to all your member families, and use it for outreach by placing it strategically in local businesses, city offices and other locations in your community,” said Yarbrough.

In addition to continuing to improve its printed newspaper, Yarbrough said the ABN has developed an extensive website of exclusive online resources, including the new ABN Podcast.

“Whether it’s in a traditional printed newspaper or through the new ABN Podcast launched earlier this year, online through our extensive website at www.arkansasbaptist.org, in our digital edition or on Facebook and Twitter, ... there are more ways than ever to read news from the ABN,” he said.

Arkansas Baptist Foundation

David Moore, president of the Arkansas Baptist Foundation, shared thoughts about the direction of the current economy and charitable giving, as well as an update about Foundation matters with messengers.

Moore said, while the past several years have been challenging regarding the economy, there are positive signs on the horizon.

Moore said charitable giving by Americans continues to be down from highs set prior to the economic downturn of 2008. By and large, charitable gifts still come from a majority of individuals (73 percent), compared to foundations (14 percent), bequests (8 percent) and corporations (5 percent).

“Arkansans donated 6.3 percent of their discretionary income on average to charity,” said Moore, adding, “(Arkansas’) estimated median charitable contribution of \$3,554 ranks in the top five states nationally.”

More than \$15.6 million in funds were distributed through the Foundation to various Arkansas Baptist and Southern Baptist causes, charities and individuals in 2011, said Moore.

“We keep doing what we do because we believe it makes an impact on the kingdom of God,” he said, and he asked churches to partner with the Foundation to promote estate stewardship and for donors to “honor God with their stewardship.”

ABCHomes

David Perry, executive director of the Arkansas Baptist Children’s Homes and Family Ministries (ABCHomes), opened the agency’s report with the Pruet Cottage girls signing words to “We Fall Down.” The Pruet Family Home in Monticello is the new family home at the children’s home.

Debi Walker, relief houseparent at the ABCHomes Paragould emergency shelter, shared a testimony, relating work at the shelter to the “Impacting Lives” theme of ABCHomes’ Thanksgiving Offering.

Walker said the impact on lives is immeasurable.

“Not only is it eternal for them, but for others,” she said. “Some may go back home, and we don’t know where God is leading them.”

Walker paraphrased from the book “Radical,” written David Platt, pastor of The Church at Brook Hills in Birmingham, Ala. “He has given us people. He has said live for them.”

Perry closed the ABCHomes report with the first public presentation of its new video, “Your Gift: Impacting Lives.”

Faith and Ethics Council

Larry Page, executive director of the Arkansas Faith and Ethics Council, encouraged messengers to vote against the Arkansas Medical Marijuana Act (AMMA) on the Nov. 6 ballot. Page said the proposal was based on bad law, bad science and driven by bad motives.



David Moore, president of the Arkansas Baptist Foundation, delivers his report during the annual meeting.

Page, who served as the chairman of the Convention Resolutions Committee at the annual meeting, helped author a resolution on AMMA which was approved by messengers.

The resolution, in part, said the measure “is really about legalizing marijuana for recreational use and not about compassionate health care for suffering Arkansans.”

“(We) strongly encourage voters to reject the notion that the largely unsupervised cultivation, marketing, distribution and smoking of marijuana is compassionate and sound medical practice, to recognize the AMMA as a clandestine attempt to take the first step toward the legalization of marijuana for recreational use in Arkansas, and to soundly reject the AMMA at the ballot box,” the resolution reads.

During his presentation, Page encouraged pastors to use the resolution – which he said was in a format suitable to make into handouts – to educate its members to the proposed measure.

Arkansas Baptist Assembly – Camp Siloam

In his report, Jason Wilkie, executive director for Camp Siloam, also known as Arkansas Baptist Assembly, shared that 901 “life-changing” decisions had been made at the camp in 2012, which he said are up 23 percent.

Additionally, Wilkie said 50 new churches visited the camp during the year and that revenue at the camp is up \$100,000.

“Five hundred and eighty more campers came than in 2011, but my favorite financial statistic is this: Each summer we pick a global missions project for campers to contribute to,” said Wilkie. “Our project this year was to send orphans to camp in the Ukraine. Our campers raised \$8,313 to give to their camp, and extended their camp by a day.”

Wilkie added, “We couldn’t do that without your help from the Cooperative Program.”

He closed his presentation with a video showing scenes from various camps held throughout the summer at Camp Siloam.

Cooperative Program recognitions and report

CABOT – With more than 30 percent of its budget dedicated to the Cooperative Program last year, First Baptist Church, Sparkman, is the top church in Arkansas in overall percentage giving. The church was recognized along with other top givers during the Cooperative Program Breakfast held at First Baptist Church, Cabot, during the 2012 Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC) Annual Meeting Oct. 31.

The church also was recognized for per capita (\$1,350 per person) given to the Cooperative Program.

"We are so thankful for our Cooperative Program givers," said Don Pucik, ABSC associate executive director. "We do this each year because we think it is very important to say thank you and to recognize those churches and leaders that have invested so heavily in this strategy for reaching the world for Christ."

Cross Church, Springdale, was first in overall giving, with \$567,069 given through the Cooperative Program.

Union Baptist Church, Harrison, led in percentage giving among churches averaging 50-99 people in Sunday school, while First Baptist Church, Almyra, led the way in percentage giving among churches averaging 100-149 people in Sunday

school.

Other churches leading in percentage giving included First Baptist Church, Des Arc, among churches averaging 150-299; Union Valley Baptist Church, Beebe, among churches averaging 300-499; First Baptist Church, Fayetteville, among churches averaging 500-749; and First Baptist Church, Russellville, among churches averaging 750-plus in Sunday school.

"The money sent from churches this year has made a difference," said Rusty Hart, ABSC executive support team member. "We have over 12,000 missionaries that depend on your support. ... we want to thank you for what you have done."

For a complete list of top churches in Cooperative Program giving, go to www.arkansasbaptist.org/topcp.

CP celebration party

Hart brought the CP report during the Tuesday evening session of the annual meeting.

Hart renamed the report the "Cooperative Program celebration party" and had sets of colored balloons line the stage.

"Southern Baptists are actually sharing the message of hope and peace through the Cooperative Program, a message that really is taking

Jesus to a lost and dying world," he said. "The Cooperative Program's not dead, irrelevant or out of touch. It's alive, ... and it's seeing unprecedented results."

He shared that this past year, 79 new churches were planted each day and one baptism took place every 46 seconds.

"Now that's something to celebrate," he said to the applause of the crowd.

Hart added, "You know, when we work together through the Cooperative Program, we are truly taking Jesus to the world. And it's really time that we celebrated all that God is doing through us."

A video of what "God is doing in and through Arkansas Baptists" was shown.

"They (most Arkansas Baptists) don't realize that their giving has such an impact," he said, "because when we get excited about our giving and we see that our giving really is taking Jesus to the world, then we get excited inside, and it does something within us."

Hart also drew attention to the billions of people who don't know the good news of Christ, saying current statistics indicate 70 percent of the world's population is lost.

As he spoke, a number of black

balloons were brought to the stage and added to the colorful ones, demonstrating that 70 percent.

Hart added it is estimated that as many as three out of four people in North America and up to 60 percent of Arkansans are lost. He said according to the International Mission Board, more than 3,500 unreached, unengaged people groups still exist today.

"You see, we celebrate tonight that our work is not done. And that's where the Cooperative Program comes in because it's an extension of everything that the local church is doing to share Jesus, and it is living proof that together we can do far more than any one church can do on its own. It's going to take us all if we're going to continue to reach the world for Christ."

Hart pointed to a number of people affected by the Cooperative Program, including 16,000 Southern Baptist seminary students, more than 2,100 students at Baptist colleges in Arkansas and more than 12,000 missionaries on the field.

"There's no doubt about it," he said, later adding, "You see the reality of our world is clear and the great need of our people is evident and our task is easily defined. We need to take Jesus to the world."



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State missions report

CABOT – Robby Tingle, Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC) missions ministries team leader, presented the state missions report during the morning session of the 2012 ABSC Annual Meeting Oct. 30 at First Baptist Church, Cabot.

Tingle interviewed several Arkansas Baptists who were involved in missions throughout Arkansas. They included Charles Simmons, pastor of new church plant ROK Church, Conway; Larry White, associational missionary for Faulkner Baptist Association; Bob Fielding, ABSC missions ministries team member; and Stacey Smith, Prison to Purpose program coordinator.

Simmons shared about what God is doing in his community. He recounted that he and his wife prayerfully considered moving to a place where they could reach the lost, so they moved into an urban apartment complex and started a small group there. After months of planning and building relationships, they have an active group of people that meet to study God's Word, and as a result, Simmons is now the chaplain for two apartment complexes and is reaching the community for Christ. The ROK Church was started from this ministry.

"I really wanted to step out on faith and do something that hasn't been done before," Simmons said.

"It's exciting to know that over the last 18 months God has been doing an incredible work in planting African-American churches," Tingle said. "In fact, we have planted eight African-American churches in the last 18 months, ... and there are about eight to nine that are on track to be planted this next year."

Tingle asked White about his involvement in the initial launch of oneChurch, a church plant sponsored by Second Baptist Church,

Conway. OneChurch later helped launch ROK church.

"The one thing about planting churches is that church plants, plant churches," Tingle said.

White said what God has done in the life of Second Baptist Church, resulting in the two church plants, has been tremendous and encouraged messengers to find out more about church planting while they are at the convention.



Robby Tingle, Arkansas Baptist State Convention missions ministries team leader, presents the state missions report.

"When you (messengers and churches) give to the Cooperative Program or the Dixie Jackson State Missions Offering, you are also supporting the ROK Church," Tingle said. "You see we are all partnered together for the cause of Christ."

"God is bringing us all together – no matter what color we are or our background is," Simmons said.

A video was shown about how international missions and chaplaincy efforts are helping to make an impact on the lost.

"Did you ever think that chaplaincy and international missions could fit together? It's amazing what God does for God's purpose," Tingle said.

"Since the 2010 Haiti earthquake, we've seen the Lord do incredible things through hundreds of Arkansas Baptists," Fielding said in the video.

Smith said she felt a longing to go to Haiti and minister to the women in prison there, so she connected with Fielding to see if they could make that happen.

"And the Lord made it happen," Fielding said.

Fielding and Smith said as a result of this partnership there are new churches in prisons in Haiti.

"This is exactly why the missions ministries team exists – to help Arkansas Baptists reach their mission field from their doorstep to the world."

this work that we do each year is not about denominational service for the sake of denominational service. The work that we do each year is for the sake of the gospel of Jesus Christ," Noel said, continuing, "None of us have time for more tasks. But we all have time to be a part of seeing lives changed by the gospel of Jesus Christ. So when you see these recommendations today, you don't just see numbers and you don't just see goals, but you see a strategy to reach people in the state of Arkansas with the good news of Jesus Christ."

Noel brings executive board recommendations

Jason Noel, president of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC) Executive Board and pastor of East Side Baptist Church, Paragould, brought two Executive Board recommendations during the Executive Board report at the ABSC Annual Meeting at First Baptist Church, Cabot.

The first recommendation was for the adoption of the 2013 ABSC Cooperative Program budget. The second recommendation was for the adoption of the ABSC team goals for 2013. Both passed unanimously.

"And I want you to know that

RELIEF

continued from page one

Springs First Baptist Church, Little Rock, were initially set up on Deer Park Pool on Acorn Street in Deer Park, with volunteers lodging from Living Hope Baptist Church in Farmingdale, which is about 10 miles from the New York coastline.

A second team of 60 volunteers left Nov. 8 to replace the first team, said Tingle. Operations are moved to the El Tabernaculo church in Deer Park for the next group of volunteers. Serving alongside the team as a volunteer is an *Arkansas Baptist News* (ABN) representative who will be reporting on the activities of volunteer teams. The latest team includes volunteers from both the First Baptist Church, Forrest City, and Current-Gaines Baptist Association feeding units. Additionally, Tri County Baptist Association volunteers were en route with chainsaw crews.

For updates and photos go to www.arkansasbaptist.org/blog or visit the ABN Facebook page at www.facebook.com/arkbaptnews.

The day the Arkansas feeding unit was activated Tingle said the response to New York by Southern

Baptists was "enormous" and that Arkansas Baptists are prepared and ready to serve residents adversely impacted by Sandy. "This quick and prompt response to move large feeding assets to New York is made possible through your church's gifts to the Dixie Jackson Arkansas Missions Offering and the Cooperative Program," said Tingle.

"If you would like to donate toward this massive effort, please donate online at www.absc.org or send a check made out to the Arkansas Baptist State Convention with 'Hurricane Sandy Relief' in the memo line," Tingle said, adding checks should be sent to Jill Modlin-Sandy Relief, Arkansas Baptist State Convention, 10 Remington Drive, Little Rock, AR 72204.

Trained disaster relief volunteers are asked to contact their "Blue Cap" disaster relief coordinator immediately, said Tingle. Others desiring to volunteer may receive training from 1 to 4 p.m. Mondays and Tuesdays Nov. 19, 20, 26 or 27 at the ABSC building.

For more information or to sign up for one of the training events, email Jill Modlin at jmodlin@absc.org or call 800-838-2272, ext. 5149.

Ministers wives gather

CABOT – Those who are married to ministers know it brings both unique privileges and unusual pressures to bear. This year's Ministers Wives Network gathering at First Baptist Church, Cabot, Oct. 29 prior to the Arkansas Baptist State Convention Annual Meeting focused on supporting each other as they work alongside their husbands to support, encourage, protect and comfort them.

"Even though our main encouragement should come from God, I urge everyone to get to know some of the other women here," said Julie Beavers, a member of the Ministers Wives Network leadership team and a member of Delta Baptist Church, Pine Bluff.

With this in mind, the group started by getting to know one another by asking icebreaker questions, such as what their favorite ice cream was or what their most embarrassing moment in life was.

"The point of all this is for you to form new friendships and gain a support system," Beavers said.

Jennifer Keenan and Susie Thompson with Fianna Hills Baptist Church, Fort Smith, led the ladies in worship songs.

Kristi Malzahn, wife of Gus Malzahn, head football coach for Arkansas State University, spoke to the ministers' wives about how it isn't easy being married to a coach or minister.

"Coaches' wives and ministers' wives are similar since our husbands

are on call 24/7," said Malzahn.

Rachel Lovingood, author of the book "In Our Shoes" and member of Long Hollow Baptist Church in Hendersonville, Tenn., shared about her book, which is "about real life issues for ministers' wives by real ministers' wives."

"There's more pressure on ministers' wives when times get tough because everyone expects us to handle everything in a godly way," Lovingood said.

She goes on to say that "we are not perfect. We're normal people who just happened to be married to ministers."

She went on to challenge women to be authentic because authenticity brings evangelism.

"When those who are lost see that we, too, are normal, it can open so many doors," Lovingood said.

The expectation of the Ministers Wives Network leadership team is to "encourage and uplift each other, as well as have a good time getting to know each other," said Beavers.

Vicki Wickliffe, preschool director with Trinity Baptist Church, Texarkana, said that's exactly why she comes.

"I enjoy coming to the ministers wives events and fellowshiping with friends," she said.

Kathy Weston with First Baptist Church, Ash Flat, said she was excited to be able to attend her first ministers' wives conference.

"I am looking forward to being a part of it," Weston said.

ABN plans to publish 2013 ABSC evangelist directory

THE ARKANSAS Baptist News (ABN) will publish an evangelist directory in conjunction with its coverage of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC) 2013 State Convention on Evangelism and Church Growth set to take place in January.

"We published our first evangelist directory in 2012, and it met with great success," said Tim Yarbrough, ABN editor.

The directory will include sections for all types of ministries, including vocational evangelists, creative and music ministries, women's ministry, children's and youth ministries and marriage enrichment ministries.

"Arkansas Baptists are blessed with a great number of tremendous leaders serving in various roles and capacities, and that certainly includes itinerant ministry," said Sonny Tucker, ABSC evangelism and church growth team leader. "We have a solid group of men and women who have served in these roles for many years, and we

have a new group of itinerant ministers that God has recently called into this work. These folks fulfill a biblical role and are a great blessing to churches. I am very excited about what I see God doing with this group of ministers who serve churches in the areas of evangelism, worship, youth, children, women's ministry, and drama/humor. I appreciate the ABN making a great effort to assist in keeping our churches informed about this group of highly talented ministers. I hope our churches will pray for these folks, get to know them and use them."

Ads are available in various sizes and will include the ministry's name, contact information, website and a general summary of the ministry, along with a photo.

For more information or to schedule an ad email abn@arkansasbaptist.org or call 501-376-4791, ext. 5154. The deadline for scheduling all ads is Nov. 30.



Hispanic mission gets new facility

Mission Bautista Ebenezer, a mission started by First Baptist Church, Russellville, to reach out to the Hispanic community in the River Valley, recently held a grand opening for its new facility located at 310 S. Glenwood Ave. in Russellville. Both congregations celebrated the dedication of the new facility, which has two classrooms, a nursery and a sanctuary that will seat 150 people.

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Elmdale Baptist Church in Springdale is seeking a **full-time senior pastor** possessing abilities as pastor, teacher, leader and caregiver. Send resumes with references to Pastor Search Committee, Elmdale Baptist Church, P.O. Box 2055, Springdale, AR 72765 or email to elmdale@elmdale.org.

Salem Baptist Church, located in the heart of the Ouachita Mountains in western Arkansas, is a traditional Scripture-based church with unlimited growth potential in search of a **full-time pastor**. Send resume to P.O. Box 28, Mena, AR 71953 or email to claydine@aol.com by Dec. 1.

Park Hill Baptist Church is seeking a dynamic **senior pastor** who can embrace and partner with us in our mission of becoming a community of worshippers committed to making, maturing and mobilizing disciples of Jesus Christ. We are seeking a pastor who has a heart for all people — the young and old as well as the church and the unchurched. Our pastor must not only have a heart for missions, but also a commitment to discipleship. With an average Sunday morning attendance of 200, we worship in a facility recently constructed to accommodate growth. We are located in the quaint college town of Arkadelphia, which is home to Ouachita Baptist University and Henderson State University. Previous full-time pastoral experience is preferred but not required. Seminary training is preferred, but a commitment to lifelong learning and study is required. To learn more about our church please visit www.parkhillbaptist.com. To apply, please send a cover letter and resume, along with contact information of three references to pastorsearch@parkhillbaptist.com.

River Road Baptist Church in Redfield is seeking a **part-time pastor**. Send resumes to P.O. Box 161, Redfield, AR 72132 or river013@centurytel.net. 501-397-2576.

Elliott Baptist Church, Camden, is seeking a

full-time pastor. Send resume to Elliott Baptist Church, Pastor Search Committee, 4189 Hwy. 376 South, Camden, AR 71701. Phone: 870-231-6411.

First Baptist Church, Alton, Mo., is seeking **pastor**. The church is Southern Baptist and located in rural south Missouri. Send resume to Pastor Search Group, First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 187, Alton, MO 65606 or email to wjwynn44@yahoo.com.

OTHER STAFF POSITIONS

Maple Avenue Baptist in Smackover is looking for a **part-time music minister**. Resumes can be sent to P.O. Box 68 Smackover, AR 71762, or emailed to the pastor at douginzer@yahoo.com.

First Baptist Church of Sherwood is seeking a **full-time children minister**. Resumes received through Dec. 1. Send to First Baptist Church, Children Minister Committee, 701 Country Club Road, Sherwood, AR 72120 or email fbc-sresponse@swbell.net.

Sylvan Hills FBC in Sherwood is accepting resumes for a **full-time minister of music**. Send to Keith Brickell, Sylvan Hills FBC, 9008 Hwy. 107, Sherwood, AR 72120.

First Baptist Church in De Queen is seeking a **full-time music minister**. Additional duties, roles and responsibilities may be added in keeping with this person's gifts and calling. Please submit resumes to First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 450, De Queen, AR 71832 or firstbaptistdequeen@windstream.net.

Clinton FBC is seeking a **full-time student minister**. Please send resumes to Student Minister Search Committee, P.O. Box 1340, Clinton, AR 72031.

First Baptist Church, Henderson, Texas, is seeking to fill the open position of **children's min-**

ister, full-time with benefits. If interested send resume to Patsy Morrison, First Baptist Church, 207 W. Main St., Henderson, TX, 75652 or email to pmorrison@thefbc.org.

First Baptist Church in Ward is accepting resumes for **bi-vocational youth director**. Email resume to fbcwoffice@centurytel.net.

Camp Paron seeking **married couple** willing to work flexible hours and varied tasks. Housing may be included as part of pay package. Call 501-837-7362 for more information.

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Barnard honored on retirement as Central AM

BENTON – A reception to honor the retirement of Ken Barnard Jr., associational missionary of Central Baptist Association, was held Oct. 31.

Barnard's retirement was effective Oct. 31, but he agreed to serve part time until a replacement can be found.

About 140 people attended the event, which was held at Highland Heights Baptist Church, Benton, immediately following the association's annual meeting Oct. 25.

"We were presented with a love offering and a book of letters from the churches in the association," said Barnard. Though he is retiring as associational missionary, he said he hopes "to be available to do some supply preaching and maybe some interims or whatever else the Lord opens up for us to do."

Barnard shared that he has been in the ministry 31 years, which has included serving as pastor of Glendale Baptist Church, Booneville, for 10 years; serving as pastor of Calvary Baptist Church, Ben-

ton, for about five and a half years, and as Central's associational missionary for 13 years.

"During his time as associational missionary, he has led mission trips to Mexico, the Dakotas, Kansas and Honduras. He is actively involved in disaster relief," said Brenda Targett, associational secretary.

She added that he has also served on the Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC) Executive Board and was named "Associational Missionary of the Year" in 2008.

Barnard emphasized that it is not about him, but rather about Christ.

"It has been an honor and a joy to serve in this capacity for the Lord and the opportunity to have ministered to and served the churches of Central Association," Barnard said about serving as associational missionary. He added he has seen the association grow in strength, health and unity.

Barnard and his wife, Sherry, have two adult sons, Brandon and Shawn.



Ken Barnard Jr. and his wife, Sherry, at Barnard's reception in honor of his retirement as associational missionary for Central Baptist Association.

Our churches: Mount Tabor

Small country church continues to 'fish for men'

JESSIEVILLE – Mount Tabor Baptist Church, Jessieville, located just north of Lake Ouachita and Buckville, may be a small country church, but it has not let size determine its effectiveness.

It wasn't many years ago that Mount Tabor Baptist had less than 45 people in attendance, according to Eunice Melton, a church member whose husband, Presley, is associational missionary for Buckville Baptist Association, of which the church is a member.

Johnny Bratton, who has been pastor about 19 years, said in 1991 there were only 39 people in attendance.

But that has changed. Bratton said regular Sunday school attendance now averages 102 people.

"With the Lord and church members being very active in the community, we have over 100 in regular attendance with 30-plus being children and youth," said Melton.

Bratton said the church holds two camps and a Bible school during the summer and pays the expenses for children and youth to attend. Due to those events and Sunday services, 42 professions of faith were made in the months of June through September.

The church's new growth is leading to a new structure. Melton and her husband provided the land on which the church currently sits, said

Bratton. And the church recently voted to build a new auditorium. They can currently only seat 137, and they have had up to 157 in worship. Their new auditorium will hold 300.

Though a number of those attending are youth and children, the congregation includes all ages.

Melton said Thelma "Granny" Dunn, who is the oldest living member of Mount Tabor, celebrated her 99th birthday in August with a large cake and gifts in her honor.

"She is a living testimony to God's love," Melton said. "We love and appreciate her so very much."

"She attends regularly every Sunday," Bratton added.

"God blesses persistence and I believe that if we continue to fish for men – and that's what we're all called to do – and how doing so you've got to stay with what works best for you," said Bratton, explaining holding camps and paying for children and youth to attend is what works for the church.

"God got the glory, and we should give Him the glory in all of it," he said. "So it's nothing that we've done – it's all Him – but we've learned through the years you've got to go out in the communities and the areas and tell kids, 'Hey do you want to go to camp?' and pay their way and get them there and let God reach them."



Several former pastors, along with current Pastor Larry Webb, attended the 75th anniversary celebration of First Baptist Church, Madison. From left: Gerald Morgan (1998-2002), Webb (2006-present), Jessie Hodges (1953-1956), Ferrel Duffel (1977-1988) and Tom Hoskins (1974-1977).

FBC, Madison, marks 75 years

MADISON – More than 75 members and former members from three states gathered Sunday, Oct. 14 to celebrate the 75th anniversary of First Baptist Church, Madison, which was established in 1937.

Pastor Larry Webb welcomed those attending the service. Jessie Hodges, former pastor in the 1950s and current pastor of Faith Baptist Church, Trumann, highlighted the morning program, and Ray Dean Davis, associational missionary for Tri County Baptist Association, shared a message. Breck Freeman, Arkansas Baptist State Convention missions ministries team member, presented the church with a certificate of recognition.

Those attending enjoyed a time

of food and fellowship before the afternoon program, which featured special music by former and present members and memories and challenges by former pastors Tom Hoskins (Clinton, Ky.), Ferrel Duffel (Manila) and Gerald Morgan (West Memphis), as well as special guest Ella Webb (Searcy), widow of former pastor John D. Webb, who served at Madison two different times.

"The day ended all too soon as everyone left with even more memories of yet another good time together as we thanked God for each other and for His 75 years of blessings on First Baptist Church of Madison," said Viola Hollowell, church member.

Church life

First Baptist Church, Monticello, recently published a cookbook celebrating the church's 150th anniversary. All proceeds go toward mission projects.

Greenfield Baptist Church, Harrisburg, will dedicate its new family life building at 5 p.m. Nov. 17.

On the move

Doug Beasley is serving on the staff of Lake Village Baptist Church, Lake Village, as associate pastor/music/senior adults.

Obituaries

Arnold Teel, 95, died Oct. 23. Born in Casa in 1917 to Robert S. and Emily (Isom) Teel, he was a retired Southern Baptist minister. He served at multiple churches, including as pastor of Happy Hollow Baptist Church, Vilonia. He is survived by his wife of 58 years, Mary Elizabeth; a son; a daughter, and two grandchildren. He is preceded in death by his parents, two brothers and four sisters. Funeral services were held at Oak Bowery Baptist Church, Conway. Burial took place at Oak Bowery Cemetery.

"Doing the work of an evangelist." II Tim 4:5

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 2013.

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Living with assurance

Sometimes anticipation can be more pleasurable than participation. This is not the case as we anticipate the return of Christ and the experience in our eternal home. David said, "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning" (Psa. 30:5).

It does appear that modern day Christendom has lost some of her fervor for Christ's return. I remember years ago that we were expecting Christ to return during our lifetimes. This is rarely observed among Christians and churches today. I can only imagine ... if only we, who are called by His name (2

Chron. 7:14), would show our inward joy and anticipation with an outward rejoicing.

Peter speaks in 2 Peter 3 about the certainty of Christ's return and the way Christians should live during these last days. He makes several recommendations for Christian living: (1) live holy lives and godly lives (2 Pet. 3:11), "without spot, and blameless" (2 Pet. 3:14), (2) be anxiously looking for "the coming of the day of God" (2 Pet. 3:12), (3) be diligent in evangelism, capitalizing upon God's patience (2 Pet. 3:15). And finally, (4) Peter says we should watch out for scoffers and

grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ (2 Pet. 3:17-18).

We live in a troubled world. Those who have no hope live in a constant state of fear. But it should never be so with believers. Jesus said, "Let not your hearts be troubled: ye believe in God" (John 14:1). We can rest in Him with great assurance because of this promise. Christians, like no one

else in all the world, should have great hope in a hopeless world.

While the world is looking for peace and rest and hope and assurance, those who know the Prince of Peace have a responsibility and an opportunity to show Him to them. A revival of the assurance of Christ's eminent return could very well be the catalyst to a revival in our land. Pray that it will be so. He is coming! Praise the Lord!

EXPLORE THE BIBLE NOVEMBER 25, 2012

Jack Schoeppey
member

First Baptist, Mena

Scripture passages:
2 Peter 3:3-14, 17-18

Our grandson Elijah is the apple of his YaYa's and Papa's eyes. We enjoy seeing the world anew through his little eyes. I often wonder, If he could form the words, what would they be? We will just have to wait and for now enjoy his babbles.

Through ignorance, Paul was called a babbler in Acts 17:16-31, but he was a mighty messenger of God.

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE NOVEMBER 25, 2012

Kelli Haigwood
member
Hermitage Baptist, Hermitage

Scripture passage:
Acts 17:16-31

He demonstrated the life a Christian should live. He acknowledged and believed that through grace we could have life eternally. No sacrifice except for the shed blood of Jesus would wash away our sins. This confounded the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers who were seeking new ideas to debate in Paul's day. He was even

accused of promoting other gods.

Paul declares in the Acts passage that the world and all it holds was created by the one and only God. He provided all life and the air we breathe, not because He needs us, but because we need Him. God desires for man to reach out to Him. He is so very near, but many turn Him away. In God, we have everything; we are His children. Paul was certainly not babbling in these Scripture passages. He boldly proclaimed the divine truth.

When we obtain salvation through grace, we become Christ's

messengers. We are divinely appointed to go forth and share God's love. We are commissioned to point sinners to Christ, not with judgment, but with compassion. Making our way down the church aisle and praying the prayer of salvation is only the beginning. Now the work begins.

As a child of God, we know He is not made of silver or gold, like some idol. He is our heavenly Father, who gave us life. Through redemption's power, we will one day soon eat from the Master's table. We will be home, and we will see Him face to face. We will see our Creator.

Exposing a broken relationship

The Lord often required His prophets to perform a difficult and even humiliating task to compliment their messages. Perhaps no prophet preached a more painful emblematic sermon than Hosea. God used his life to expose Israel's adulterous relationship (Hos. 1:1-2). God gave each of Hosea's children a name indicating His dealings with an unfaithful people. The firstborn was named "Jezreel," meaning "I will punish," and indicated the coming judgment (Hos. 1:4). Their second child was named "Lo-ruhamah," meaning "no mercy," and indicated His mercy for Israel would soon

come to an end (Hos. 1:6). Their third child was called "Loammī," meaning "not mine," and indicated God would no longer consider Israel His people (Hos. 1:8-9). Gomer would leave Hosea, entering a life of prostitution to the point of enslavement, and Hosea would have to purchase her to restore their relationship (Hos. 1:4; 3:1-3).

Hosea's message is a plea for God's people to return to God. Even in the depth of tragedy and sorrow, Hosea has a deep desire for his people to know God intimately and not merely through religious ritual (Hos. 6:6). Despite Israel's unfaith-

fulness and God's judgment upon her, there is hope: "Yet the time will come when Israel's people will be like the sands of the seashore—too many to count! Then, at the place where they were told, 'You are not my people,' it will be said, 'You are children of the living God'" (Hos. 1:10, NLT).

No modern day preachers would

desire a calling like Hosea's, but they should preach his message. Spiritual adultery is a real danger

for Christians. The relationship between believers and Christ is likened to marriage (Eph. 5:25-33). When Christians turn away from Christ and adopt attitudes, beliefs, values, practices and rituals that are contrary to God and His Word, they commit spiritual adultery just as ancient Israel (2 Cor. 11:2-4).

EXPLORE THE BIBLE DECEMBER 2, 2012

Gerald W. Nash Jr.
chaplain
Second Baptist, Conway

Scripture passages:
Hosea 1:1-2; 2:2-5; 3:1-5

A person's name is one of the most important and personal things of his or her life. It is what separates one from another. Knowing the person's name (including God's name) is a key to a healthy relationship.

Seventeen times in seven verses of Exodus 6:2-8, the personal pronoun "I" is used. Grammatically, "I" is first person singular. Each time in this passage it refers to the person of God. This is not an accident. It

is here because the passage wants to help us understand who God is.

Four times the expression "I (alone) am The LORD" is used. An adequate understanding of this phrase will help us understand this name that God calls Himself. The word "LORD" is correct because it equates Yahweh with God.

God's name is Yahweh or Jehovah. These are strong words that can-

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE DECEMBER 2, 2012

Charles Collins
chaplain
Baptist Hospital, Little Rock

Scripture passages:
Exodus 6:2-8, 15:1-3, 11-13

Yahweh our God

not stand alone. They must be supported by proof or evidence that puts muscles into the words. God must prove that He is who He says He is by what He has done and by what He plans to do in the future.

God has done several things. He appeared to the patriots of old by the name "God Almighty" (El Shaddai). He established a covenant with them. He had made promises to them that had not become a fact, but this would soon change. God was about to finish a job started in the past.

God goes on to tell us what He is about at that moment. He has heard His children call for help. He has

remembered His promises. He is about to take them out of Egyptian bondage and free them from slavery. They would become God's people, and He would be their God.

Exodus 15:1-3 continues with more uses of the word "I," but they refer to Moses, not God. The use of "I," combined with the use of "my," lets us know that God has done what He said He would do. God has become our God and is our salvation.

God has delivered the people and defeated their oppressors. He has defeated their army and put their power to shame. We praise God today for He is our Lord as He was then.

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