

ABN Digest

Stories of interest
to Arkansas Baptists

Target sales slide, boycotts not cause

MINNEAPOLIS, Minn. – Target's shares fell 7.6 percent to \$68 on May 18, the company's biggest one-day stock drop since the onset of the global financial crisis in September 2008. Target shares are now down 19 percent from their high close of \$83.98 on April 19. According to Target's CEO, the petition calling for a boycott of the company's stores over transgender-friendly bathroom policy did not impact the retail giant. "You've heard us talk over the years about our commitment to diversity and inclusion," Target CEO Brian Cornell told *Fortune*. He did say that a few stores had some protests and took a bit of a hit sales wise, but on the whole, the 1,800-store retailer didn't feel anything. "To date we have not seen a material or measurable impact on our business, just a handful of stores across the country have seen some activity and have been impacted."

Okla. pro-life governor vetos abortion measure

OKLAHOMA CITY, Okla. – Oklahoma Gov. Mary Fallin, an anti-abortion Republican, vetoed a bill May 20 which effectively bans the procedure in the state. Oklahoma lawmakers had approved legislation making it a felony for doctors to perform abortions, an effort that the bill's sponsor said is aimed at ultimately overturning the U.S. Supreme Court's 1973 decision that legalized abortion nationwide. Senate Bill 1552 passed 33-12 with no discussion or debate; a handful of Republicans joined with Democrats in voting against the bill sponsored by Republican Sen. Nathan Dahm.

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

Page: Bi-vocational pastors 'not alone'

HANNIBAL, Mo. – "Bi-vocational pastors are my heroes" said Frank S. Page, president of the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee, during an address at the annual session of the Bivocational and Small Church Leadership Network (BSCLN) May 13-14 at Hannibal-LaGrange University.

"You are not alone," Page told the 55 pastors and wives gathered at the auditorium of the university in Hannibal, Mo., repeating a message he often shares as he speaks around the nation.

But one day a bi-vocational pastor wrote Page a letter disputing that statement.

"I am alone," the pastor wrote. He went on to describe his bleak ministry situation and said, "I doubt you will even read this letter because you probably have a secretary to read your mail."

The pastor even pointed out that he was penning the letter by hand because he didn't have a secretary or a computer. He closed with his

phone number but said he didn't expect a return call.

Page said he picked up the phone and called the surprised pastor to encourage him and let him know he was not alone. He listened to his hurts and arranged for the pastor's state convention executive director and associational director of missions to also reach out to the pastor.

"In bi-vocational ministry, you will walk through valleys," Page said. "There will be times when God will wrap His loving arms around you, and He will give you rest."

In 1 Samuel 3, God called the young prophet Samuel, and He called him by his name, Page said. "God calls and He knows your name," he noted. "Learn to rest in that call."

Cliff Woodman, the conference coordinator, said the concept of the bi-vocational pastor being lonely and hurting is a common image.

"The term 'bi-vocational' is no longer a stigma," he said. "We used to think that, if a



Sarah Seibert (right), poses with international students from Nepal following their arrival in January. The group was on its way to a Super Bowl party. "God has given us total access," Seibert said. "We have the opportunity to reach the world without ever leaving home." Since 65 percent of international students come from unreached regions of the world like Nepal, coming to the U.S. may be the only way some ever hear about Jesus Christ, said Seibert.

MISSIONS

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students will accept the gospel and share it in their own language, culture and country. Since 65 percent of international students come from unreached regions of the world, it may be the only way their nations hear about Christ. These

are the educated and wealthy individuals who could have influence in government.

"God has given us total access," Seibert said. "We have the opportunity to reach the world without ever leaving home."

For more information about ministry to international students email Stephens at bstephens@absc.org.



Frank S. Page (left), president of the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee, shared pictures of his grandkids with Lynn Riley, (right) bivocational ministry specialist at the Arkansas Baptist State Convention during a conference meal. Photo by Richard Nations

man couldn't afford to live on the salary of his ministry, he would have to get another job. Today there is more respect for the bi-vocational pastor. Men are intentionally going into bivocational ministry. Full-time ministry is not better than 'bi-vo.' There is no 'move up.'"

Many "bi-vos," he said, are highly educated, and they intend to serve a church and have another job most of their lives. Woodman is a pastor in Carlinville, Ill., and he serves as president of BSCLN.

Ray Gilder, national coordinator of the BSCLN agreed the term "bi-vocational pastor" has been a "chokehold" for many. "Most people are no longer adverse to the term."

With church attendances declining in many places, it is the only reality for some congregations running 75 or less.

Gary Mathes, pastoral ministry specialist for the Missouri Baptist Convention, said he estimates 50 to 60 percent of Missouri Baptist congregations call a bi-vocational pastor. Mathes noted some rural associations may run as high as 70 to 80 percent.

Arkansas bi-vocationals

Of the 1,530 churches in the Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC), 1,100 churches average less than 100, and 700 average less than 50, according to Lynn Riley, a member of the ABSC church health team.

"Bi-vocational and smaller membership church pastors and staff are on the frontlines

of ministry in Arkansas," said Riley, adding, "Pastors and others leaders who serve part time or voluntarily provide vital ministry to churches and communities that touch many unreached and underserved people in the state."

Riley said while some believe leaders of small churches are only "biding their time until a larger church comes along," nothing could be farther from the truth.

"Many choose to serve in smaller churches because they feel called to the work. They are no less professional and no less committed than those who serve in full-time positions. In fact, their commitment goes a step farther as they not only juggle church and family responsibilities, they do it as the only staff member in the church or work at another job to support their families. The major struggle they face is finding time to accomplish all that's needed and expected of them," he said.

"90 percent of all pastors in the SBC will never serve a church larger than 200," said Riley.

"The ABSC is continuing to develop strategies to work in partnership with associational missionaries to provide resources, training and encouragement to staff and leadership in these churches," Riley added.

The BSCLN conference is held annually in different locations around the nation. For more information, visit bscln.net.

Students experience ministry through E4Call

COLLEGE STUDENTS and recent high school graduates gathered together with Arkansas Baptist ministry mentors from multiple churches and associations May 12-13 to prepare for a summer of ministry experience through the Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC) E4Call program.

E4Call, formerly known as KALEO, derives its name from Ephesians 4:1 in which the Apostle Paul calls believers to “walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called” (ESV).

The program is a ministry of the ABSC’s missions and college and young leaders teams and in cooperation with local Arkansas Baptist churches and associations, as well as the North American Mission Board and International Mission Board.

One of the main aspects of E4Call is its 10-week summer mentorship program, which allows students to learn the ropes of ministry by serving alongside veteran vocational ministers in local churches, associations and businesses across the state.

Training was held at the

ABSC building in Little Rock and at Camp Paron in Paron. This year’s mentorship program includes 38 students who will be paired with 28 mentors. Twenty-three churches, two associations, a church plant and a Baptist Collegiate Ministry are involved. Two of the students are partnered with local businesses in order to minister through E4Call’s marketplace ministry.

This year’s participating churches, associations and organizations include: Barcelona Road Baptist Church, Hot Springs Village; Central Community Church, Harrisburg; Central Baptist Church, Magnolia; The Compass Church, Batesville; East Side Baptist Church, Pine Bluff; First Baptist Church, England; Fianna Baptist Church, Fort Smith; Forefront Mission, no location provided; Freeman Heights Baptist Church, Berryville; First Baptist Church, Gould; Grand Avenue Baptist Church, Fort Smith; First Baptist Church, Greenwood; First Baptist Church, Harrison; First Baptist Church, Huntsville; Central Baptist Church, Jonesboro (Journey Campus);



Lynn Loyd (right), missions consultant for the Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC) college and young leaders team, meets with a student during E4Call training. Photo by Nick Burt

First Baptist Church, Marion; First Baptist Church, Mautelle; Metro Church, Centerton; First Baptist Church, Norphlet; North Pulaski Baptist Association, North Little Rock; First Baptist Church, Pocahontas; Strawfloor Baptist Church, Jonesboro; Washington-Madison Baptist Association, Fayetteville; West Baptist Church, Batesville; West Fork Baptist Church, West Fork, and MF Block Insurance Agency, Corning.

“These students will be involved in a variety of mission opportunities,” said Breck Freeman, ABSC missions team member and E4Call strategist. “From visiting hospitals, to going to church camps,

leading in vacation Bible school (VBS) and serving with their mentors in their different areas of service in the church and community.”

“E4Call ... is helping students find their calling to serve the Lord in churches across the state. Some of the students are now pastors, youth pastors and missionaries,” said Freeman. “Other students have found they are called to serve in the marketplace and allow God to use them in business and other vocations across the state and world.”

“E4Call helps students find out what God has really called them to be,” he said.

For more information visit cylarkansas.com/e4call.

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Gay marriage advocates challenge Wyo. judge

CHEYENNE, Wyo. (BP) – In what could be the nation’s first religious litmus test for holding a judicial post, the Wyoming Supreme Court is being asked to dismiss a small-town municipal court judge because of her biblical views about marriage.

Attorneys for Judge Ruth Neely, along with a growing list of supporters, argue the efforts of an unelected state commission to remove her from office are rooted in religious bias and misinterpretation of the law. In 2014, a judge overturned Wyoming’s marriage statute, allowing same-sex couples to get marriage licenses.

A reporter asked Neely, the Pinedale municipal court judge and a part-time circuit court magistrate, if she was excited about performing same-sex weddings. In the opinion of the Wyoming Commission on Judicial Conduct and Ethics, Neely gave the wrong answer: Her biblical convictions about marriage precluded her from solemnizing such a union.

In December 2014, with no formal complaint filed against Neely over her published remarks, Wendy Soto, executive director of the commission, initiated a judicial misconduct investigation. Within two weeks, the investigatory panel launched a full inquiry. By February 2016, the commission voted unanimously to recommend that the Wyoming Supreme Court remove Neely from her posts, asserting her statement about the sanctity of marriage was tantamount to a refusal to obey the law.

Legal scholars say the commission has created “a de facto religious test for judicial office in Wyoming.”

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

Rising health care costs a concern for churches

DALLAS (BP) – Health care costs continue to rise due to impact from the federal Affordable Care Act and are causing insurers to seek large rate hikes, while others have chosen to depart the health care exchanges altogether, according to GuideStone Financial Resources.

The financial services arm of the Southern Baptist Convention noted some ways to help “mitigate the impact” of rising costs.

UnitedHealth, the nation’s largest medical insurance provider, recently announced it lost \$650 million in 2015, on top of a \$425 million loss in 2014, as a result of offering medical insurance on the various exchanges established through the Affordable Care Act. UnitedHealth has announced it would pull out of all but a few exchanges for 2017.

While private insurance

rates may vary from the rates charged on health care exchanges under the Affordable Care Act, they are related. According to the Associated Press, customers in the health care exchanges could see medical insurance rate increases that reach “well into double digits,” as evidenced by Virginia health care providers on the healthcare.gov website filing preliminary notices seeking average premium increases ranging from 9.4 percent to 37.1 percent.

As churches plan their 2017 budgets, they should consider that most of the industry is reporting significant increases in core health care/medical insurance and pharmacy costs through the first quarter of 2016.

“GuideStone’s relation-

ship with the national Blue Cross Blue Shield and Express Scripts networks provides deep discounting of medical and prescription costs,” GuideStone President O.S. Hawkins said. “This helps mitigate the impact of rising medical and pharmacy costs. Through GuideStone, our participants have access to the broadest medical and pharmacy networks in America, with no narrow networks or exclusions, enabling our participants to maintain their personal physician-patient relationships.”

Additionally, GuideStone remains committed to offering the Teladoc service that can help participants and employers save time and money for non-life-threatening medical needs. GuideStone noted that due to state law, the Teladoc

service is not available in Arkansas. The service allows registered users to talk via phone or computer video connection to a live, U.S.-based, board-certified physician who can resolve many medical issues.

“As we design our medical coverage for 2017, and beyond, we are committed to continue to provide high-quality health care coverage at competitive prices for our participants, as well as for the employers we serve,” Hawkins said. “Through services like Teladoc, and by using technological tools to provide our participants the opportunity to make healthier lifestyle choices, we are working to slow the impact of core medical inflation for the benefits of our participants and their employers.”

GuideStone will inform the churches, ministries and participants it serves about medical insurance rates for 2017 in mid- to late September.

There are ways to ‘mitigate the impact’ of rising costs.

– GuideStone

Editorial & Opinion

"Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have..."

1 Peter 3:15 (NIV)

How not using a turn signal points to 'me' world

Over the past several years I noticed some interesting and alarming things begin to happen in our country.

For example, for as long I have been an automobile driver – which is nearly 40 years now – I thought that using a turn signal when making a turn and cruising to the right on a four-lane road unless passing another vehicle was not only the law but also



Pressing On

Tim Yarbrough
Phil. 3:14

evidence of common sense. I must have been wrong all of these years.

On a trip back from Fayetteville recently I noticed a number of drivers cruising along in the left lane for literally miles and miles – even when they were not passing and there were no other cars in sight. Additionally, I also noted on the trip that a number of cars that were changing

lanes did not use their blinkers.

Again, I thought that was the law, but once again I must be mistaken. I would guess more motorists I saw did not use signals than did.

Then, on Saturday of the same week, my wife and I were downtown in the Little Rock River Market when we

saw probably a half dozen people walking around asking people to sign a petition.

My immediate reaction was that it was a petition for something like improving our highways or something of the sort.

But I quickly realized the real purpose of the petition as others in the same group were walking about carrying signs advocating the legalization of marijuana.

It was no surprise. The last

time Arkansas voters turned down the legalization of marijuana for “medical purposes” it was narrowly defeated. Now I’m afraid with a number of states allowing the sale of marijuana for both medical and recreational purposes, the days of it being banned in Arkansas could be numbered.

I have recounted these observations to say that it seems that in our country today that literally anything goes as long as someone advocates for it.

Take for instance the ludicrous directive by the Obama administration telling public schools they should allow transgender students to use restrooms according to their self-described “gender identity.”

Today seems to be all about me and whatever “me” wants.

Scripture sees it somewhat differently. Selfishness and love are complete opposites.

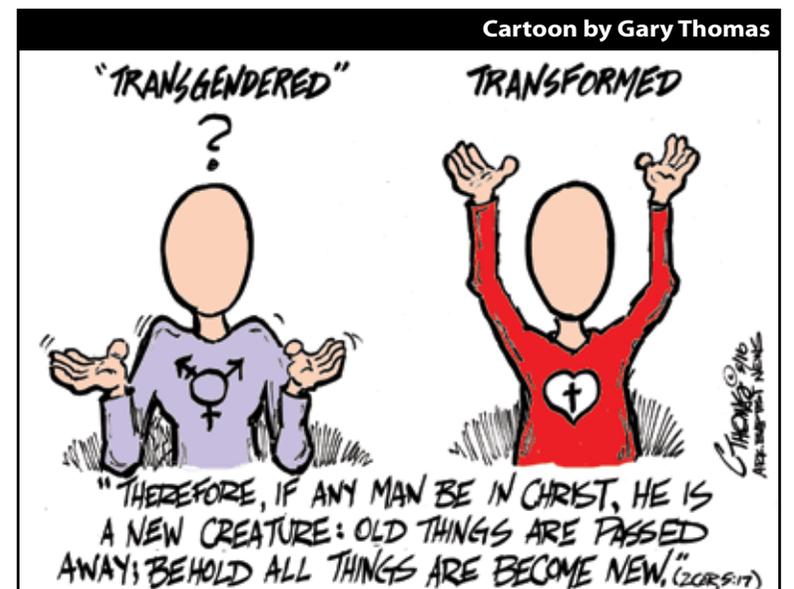
“Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in

humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others” (Phil. 2:3-4, ESV).

And of course, we know the Lord commands us to “love your neighbor as yourself” (Mark 12:31, ESV).

There you have it. Whether not using a turn signal or desiring to smoke pot – it all indicates that you are putting yourself before others, and for that matter, before God. And there’s only one source for that, and it isn’t God.

Tim Yarbrough is editor/executive director of the ABN.



It's not about the bathroom

Who would have ever thought that the Obama administration would be so concerned about bathrooms?

Surely the leader of the free world has more important things on his agenda. But apparently he does not. Withholding federal funding if a girl can't use a boy's locker room? This sounds like a pretty serious threat. It is very serious, but not for the reasons we may think.

The fight over biological boys being able to use a girl's bathroom or locker room is

only the new line in the sand over the not-so-new Civil Rights debate. Ultimately this is not, nor has it ever been, simply about the bathroom.

If it were, Americans would be some pretty lousy problem-solvers. For example, the American Family Association (AFA) just delivered to Target stores a list of a million people – a million people – who are boycotting them because they will not budge on the bathroom issue.

The AFA made one simple suggestion: create a third, unisex bathroom. This is nothing

new, and it seems reasonable. In many retail stores, I've seen family bathrooms that are designed to accommodate families with small children, disabled people and those who simply want a little more privacy.

They've been doing it for years. So why did Target decline their suggestion to reclaim a million customers? It's not about the bathroom, and we all know it. This is about an agenda.

I recognize that there are a lot of truly distraught and sin-



cere people who suffer from gender dysphoria. Frankly, I am offended by Christians who make jokes about them. Many of these are just everyday folks who deal with something the rest of the population doesn't understand, and they need to hear about freedom through Christ.

Behind many of them, however, is a wicked agenda being pushed by a few who are bent on destroying traditional family values, and it seems our commander in chief is in lockstep. These are

the same ones who would not compromise on having civil unions. No, the government needed to redefine marriage. These are the ones who now will not compromise on the bathroom issue. Reasonable accommodation? Nope. Redefinition is the only acceptable answer. Make no mistake. This is not about bathrooms. This is about a handful of people who will stop at nothing until American society not only tolerates their lifestyle but also destroys traditional family values for the sake of a few.

Kim Reeder is a former Arkansas Baptist and frequent Arkansas Baptist News contributor.



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'CPR' training



Family Matters

Ben Phillips

First Aid 101 was an elective I took in college, where I learned some valuable life-saving skills in basic first aid, including CPR training. CPR is an acronym for cardiopulmonary resuscitation. CPR training is a valuable skill that has saved many lives.

Since finishing college, I've learned the importance of relational first aid, which also involves CPR training. Couples Praying Regularly is the acronym that I use during marriage enrichment experiences to help couples practice praying together during retreats so they continue praying together beyond the weekend.

I did not receive CPR training in premarital counseling, nor did I practice CPR early on in marriage. I've learned over time the valuable relational first aid that CPR can bring to my marriage and family. It enables my wife and me to share together and lift our burdens and blessings to God. We have prayed together through conflicts, daily life and decisions.

If you haven't regularly prayed with your spouse, then start with short consistent prayer times. Pray privately with your spouse. During times away from one another, pray over the phone or leave prayer voicemails or prayer texts. If you need to add some creativity to praying regularly with your spouse, then pick a verse you read together and as you pray use a word or phrase from that verse in your prayer. If you need some specific help and guidance then check out the Pray31 smartphone apps for some creative ideas for praying for your spouse.

At the conclusion of a marriage enrichment experience, one pastor shared the story of his parents who were present. In their decades of marriage, they had never prayed together until they were exposed to several CPR times during the date night. After experiencing those CPR times, the pastor's dad said that CPR times would become a regular part of their marriage from that night forward. Couples Praying Regularly can be a lifesaver for a marriage that is struggling, and it can make a good marriage great. When was the last time you prayed with your spouse? Stop and engage in a CPR time now.

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

Summers are 'Super' in Arkansas!

Arkansas Baptists' commitment to the Great Commission takes center stage during the summer in Arkansas. Our churches are about to be unleashed in a flurry of activities that will have lifelong significance and eternal impact.

Children and students are two of our top priorities during the summer break. There will be tens of thousands involved in vacation Bible school and backyard Bible clubs with a large number professing faith in Christ. There will be multiplied thousands of students involved in church camps such as Camp Siloam, Super Summer and associational camps. Hundreds of these students will profess faith in Christ and make significant spiritual decisions. Annually we have about 500 students indicate an interest in vocational ministry with most of these decisions made during these summer events.

Many of our churches go on mission trips internationally, in North America and locally. Many churches display the love of Christ in practical ways by engaging in local, "safe" missions endeavors for their children and middle school students.

There are several things we must do to prepare for this

incredible time of the year. Every event should be preceded by periods of intense prayer. Detailed discipleship plans should be made to follow up on those who profess faith in Christ and make other spiritual decisions. Sunday school classes and outreach teams should be prepared to follow up with the spiritually disengaged with whom connections are made. Safety precautions should be taken in matters related to travel, liability and training of workers. Schedule in your services times of testimony and celebration of the wonderful things God is doing.

Please be aware that all of these events are extremely physically draining and emotionally taxing on your pastor and staff. Ensure that your pastor and staff do not give up their family vacation time for this flurry of wonderful events. Insist they have days off and periods of downtime. Provide travel and other expenses for your pastor, staff and their families in these church endeavors.

Along with the fantastically beautiful scenery and great weather in Arkansas will come an incredible amount of activity resulting in tremendous spiritual impact.

Summers are truly Super in Arkansas!

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



Executive Directions

Sonny Tucker

Your questions and God's answers

Currently in my preaching schedule, I'm working through a series titled, "Q&A: Your Questions & God's Answers." Prior to beginning the series, I encouraged those who worship with us to submit their questions about God and/or faith. Here's a sample of the type of questions I've received: (1) What's the eternal destiny of my child who died as an infant? (2) How is my daughter (or anyone mentally handicapped) to secure their eternity?

I didn't say this was easy! I tackled those two questions on Mother's Day by combining them into one question: When are we accountable for our sinful nature? Knowing there are different ways to address this issue, I'm going to leave the tough work of unpacking that question to you pastors who might have that question asked of you after one of your flock reads this article. (You can thank me later!) However, I hope the following pastoral advice I shared with parents on Mother's Day is beneficial to parents across the Arkansas Baptist State Convention.

Create opportunities to speak the gospel into your child's life. Be intentional to speak the gospel into your child's life, beginning when your child is very young. Share the life of Christ with your child. Make sure your child hears the "old, old story of Jesus and His love." Saturate your conversations with the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. When your child makes a mistake or child chooses to do wrong, remind your child that this is why Jesus died. We are born with a sinful nature, and the only way we can be free from the penalty of sin is faith in Jesus.

Partner with your local church for the faith development of your child. Scripture teaches that parents have the primary responsibility for making sure their child knows who

God is, what sin is, what Jesus has done, what salvation is and how salvation occurs. Parents, this is your responsibility. However, your local church wants to be your partner in that process. So parents, please take advantage of all the opportunities your church provides for your child to learn about Jesus. Please do not neglect this important part of God's plan for your child to come to faith in Christ and to grow in faith.

Teach your child that Jesus is better than anything else in this world, and support that teaching with your own life and your commitment to the church. I think too

often many of us send mixed messages to our children about what is really important. Now, we might tell our children how important a relationship with Jesus is and how important it is to keep Jesus first, but when we put anything else ahead of our worship as a family and our pursuit of Jesus, we are sending a message that whatever that activity is, at that time, it is more

important than Jesus.

Research indicates that a parent's faith is a key indicator in a student's decision to either walk away from faith and the church or remain in the church and continue to pursue Jesus following high school graduation. In one case, it's the lack of consistency in a parent's faith. In the other, it's the integrity of a parent's faith.

Although I can't tell you the age your child will become accountable, I can tell you your child will become accountable. So mom and dad, speak the gospel into your child's life now, partner with your local church, and show and tell with your life in front of your child that Jesus is better than anything else in this world.

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



President's Perspective

Sam Roberts



Support the ABN!

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

Camp Siloam: God at work

I want to fly into Siloam Springs and see the camp," said Jason Benton, president of AES Industries. In my six years as camp director at Siloam, no one had ever wanted to fly into Siloam Springs just to see the camp. I knew something was up.

After a tour of the camp, Benton and I sat down to visit. Over a cup of coffee, Benton shared that he had prepared a refund for a customer on a big project and the customer rejected the refund. Benton was flying home from the meeting when

God spoke to him and placed Camp Siloam on his mind. Sitting at our conference table, he pulled a check from his pocket and said, "I want this to go toward your dining hall project." I accepted the check with awe in my heart and tears in my eyes.

Benton's gift was powerful to me because God spoke to the heart of a man regarding the need at Camp Siloam. I love it when I can see God work in these kinds of ways.



Camp Siloam

Jason Wilkie

For me personally, the Feed My Sheep campaign has been a lesson on faithfulness; sometimes I feel like I'm not the best student.

For four months, the Feed My Sheep campaign held at 21 percent

of our campaign goal of \$3.4 million. The staff and I wondered what was going on. What was God doing? He was teaching patience and faithfulness.

As of this writing, we are

just over 28 percent of our campaign goal with \$959,069 in pledges and gifts. It would be exciting for campers this summer to hear people have given \$1 million for the new dining hall.

The campaign to churches currently has 35 churches that have participated, donating with gifts totaling \$42,169. Our goal is to see 150 churches participate in the Feed My Sheep campaign. I am so appreciative of the gifts and support pastors have expressed for the campaign.

While we have a good

plan in place to complete the campaign, there is still a lot of room for God to work in the hearts of His people. Our prayer request for God's prayer warriors is that He would move in a powerful way and get the glory for completing the dining hall at Camp Siloam.

He knows the need, and I am thoroughly convinced that God wants to continue to draw people into His kingdom at this special place.

Jason Wilkie is executive director of Camp Siloam located near Siloam Springs.

ABCHomes: Serving churches

An article in the May 5 issue of the *Arkansas Baptist News* included a report about Southern Baptist Convention President Ronnie Floyd, speaking at the annual meeting of the Baptist Coalition for Children and Families (BCCF), hosted by Arkansas Baptist Children's Homes (ABCHomes). Floyd reminded the group that their ministries "exist to serve churches." Maybe you thought that agencies like ABCHomes existed to serve children and families, and you would be correct. Floyd is correct as well. We are here to serve our Arkansas Baptist churches. I recall an old agency slide-show pre-

sentation that I shared with many churches in the early 1980s called, "An Arm of the Church Reaching Out." One key way that we serve our churches is to respond on their behalf in direct ministry to children and families in crisis.

However, we are also here to serve our churches in a more intimate manner.

While we care for many children referred by the Arkansas Department of Human Services, we encourage referrals from Baptist min-

isters who are dealing with struggling individuals and families. Often those calls are just exploratory in nature, seeking guidance in how to respond to particular needs.

Some of those referrals may lead to children being placed by their guardians

in our Children's Home, Boys Ranch or emergency shelters. Our goal, when it is in the best interest of the child, is to work with both child and family in hopes of restoring the family unit.



ABCHomes

David Perry

A half-century at Williams Baptist College

My life has been connected with Williams Baptist College (WBC) since I was 16 years old and enrolled as a freshman. In my second year at the college, I was elected student government president, and that put me in contact with the founder of the college, Dr. H.E. Williams.

When I completed my undergraduate degree in English at Arkansas State University, Dr. Williams told me if I would complete a master's degree, he would hire me to teach. I enrolled for graduate studies at Indiana University and soon began my career at WBC.

Dr. Williams liked me, particularly since he liked my wife, Barbara (Mitchell). While a student at WBC, she

also worked as a secretary in his Little Rock office when he ran for governor of Arkansas in 1960. I have often joked that a letter never arrived at our residence asking for money for WBC that Barbara did not mail a check to her alma mater!

Our first year of living in Faculty Cove housing, Barbara said she wanted to invite Dr. and Mrs. Williams to dinner. Our house did not have a dining room, and one of our neighbors was shocked. She said, "Barbara, where will you feed your guests?" She replied, "In the kitchen. I will set the table as best I can in such cramped quarters, but Dr. and Mrs.

Williams will love my food."

They did!

In March of this year, I signed my 50th contract to teach English at WBC and to serve as the chair, department of English and communica-

tion arts, and as chair, division of arts and sciences. During this half century, I have witnessed the college

become an officially adopted member of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention. In 1984, I rejoiced when the convention approved the college moving from a two-year college to four-year status. In 1991, the college changed its name from "Southern" to "Williams" to honor the



Williams Baptist

Jerry Gibbens

founder.

In 1993, the English department began placing Bachelor of Science in Education student interns in the public schools. Also, the department began an affiliation with Sigma Tau Delta, the international English honor society. Over the past 23 years, our English majors and minors have read scholarly papers across the United States.

Many things have changed over the years: Swaim Administration Building, Manley Chapel and many other beautiful facilities have been added. The college has added two endowed lectureships and has received several seven-figure gifts. Williams now offers more than 25 baccalaureate majors, and it continues to rise in the college rankings of

U.S. News & World Report.

And many things have not changed: the Christ-centered worldview, weekly chapel, mission trips, dedicated faculty and a well-rounded core curriculum. The college also continues its longstanding accreditation with the Higher Learning Commission and with Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP), the teacher education organization.

During my tenure at Williams, I have worked for all six presidents: Drs. Williams, Nicholas, Milliken, Huckabee, Swaim and Jones. They have all treated me kindly. I have absolutely loved being a part of such a fine college!

This fall Jerry Gibbens will start his 50th year as an English professor at WBC.

BUDGET

continued from page one

the Dermott area were assisted with the flooding damage. Their church and community were very grateful for the ABSC support in this storm," said Harper.

Additionally, the ABSC mission team – working with the Delta Network – held a joint block party and medical/dental clinic at Tabernacle Baptist on April 30, he said.

"Over 100 patients were seen at the medical/dental clinic. Over 300 attended the block party, and DR fed over 200. Six people were saved, there were two rededications, and one person requested to be baptized," said Harper. "Follow up has already been done today by Pastor Lattimore, Tabernacle Baptist Church and his team."

Harper added, "The Tabernacle church family has been very appreciative of their new partnership and membership with ABSC."

2017 budget OK'd

Following a reporting time by ABSC agencies and Executive Board program staff, the Finance Committee unanimously approved a \$21 million unified Cooperative Program (CP) budget for 2017. The budget represents a \$1 million reduction from 2016, though budget percentage allocations for various convention ministries remain the same as the previous year.

ABSC programs and related entity budget allocations for 2017 are \$11,690,217 – which is 55.67 percent of the total CP budget (For individual agency allocations, see related table for a detailed 2017 budget breakdown above right).

Jeff Corley, ABSC controller, said since CP receipts have been in the \$20.5 million range for a number of years, "reducing the budgeted amount is an effort to have a realistic budget."

The budget recommended by the committee reflects the fifth and final year of the ABSC's 2013-17 budget formula approved by messengers at the 2011 annual meeting. The budget includes a special "shared ministry" line item designed to forward an increasing amount of funds (total receipts) to the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC). The current percent-

age increase is two-tenths of 1 percent each year during the five-year formula period.

A committee has been meeting to evaluate the budget formula and will be making a recommendation for the 2018-22 budget. The full board is scheduled to vote Aug. 16 on the 2017 budget recommendation, which then will be sent to messengers for approval at the state convention annual meeting Oct. 25-26 at Immanuel Baptist Church in Little Rock.

Tucker 'directions'

In an executive directions report, ABSC Executive Director J.D. "Sonny" Tucker reviewed the convention's budget process.

"Every five years, our state convention votes on a budget formula plan on exactly what we do with percentages and Cooperative Program missions," said Tucker.

"You want to pray for this. You want to ask God to bless it. You know there are a lot of different competing philosophies about vision in the Southern Baptist Convention and where the money ought to go. If you don't know that, I need to tell you," he said.

"There are unbelievable, incredible, intense ... opinions on where the missions money in the Southern Baptist Convention needs to go. This is not a time to preserve traditions that don't need to go ahead. It's about kingdom. It's about Jesus. It's about the gospel," said Tucker.

"We haven't been too much affected by what's happening in the SBC in Arkansas. We've been somewhat insulated. That's not a bad thing."

Tucker said the SBC boards "remake" every five years and bring along changes and "different leaders, different philosophies. We are connected to them in partnership. We have said that we are going to take care of Arkansas. And so it's a both/and approach. It's delicate; a lot of opinions ... we have a lot of great unity in the state and a lot of great folks, a lot of great leaders. We may not always see everything together. ... (but) there's consensus and there's unity. I intend to do more for Jesus than we have ever done."

Additional reports

In other reports, the board:

- Heard a testimony from Sam Hoisington, a sophomore journalism student at

2017 Unified Cooperative Program Budget			
Designated Area		2017 Budget	% of Budget
Arkansas Baptist State Convention	Executive Board Programs	\$6,100,213	29.05%
	Pastoral Scholarship Fund	\$162,819	0.78%
	Convention (annual meeting, committees, etc.)	\$164,286	0.78%
	Church Protection Plan - GuideStone	\$57,212	0.27%
	Camp Siloam	\$241,151	1.15%
	Children's Homes and Family Ministries	\$555,220	2.64%
	Arkansas Baptist Foundation	\$325,032	1.55%
	Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine	\$277,521	1.32%
	Ouachita Baptist University	\$3,016,358	14.36%
	Williams Baptist College	\$908,487	4.33%
	Subtotal before Shared Ministries deducted	\$11,808,300	56.23%
Less (-) State Shared Ministry Allocation	-\$118,083	-0.56%	
TOTAL: ARKANSAS BAPTIST STATE CONVENTION	\$11,690,217	55.67%	
Southern Baptist Convention	Southern Baptist Convention	\$9,191,700	43.77%
	Less (-) SBC Shared Ministry Allocation	-\$91,917	-0.44%
	TOTAL: SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION	\$9,099,783	43.33%
	International Mission Board	\$4,587,201	21.84%
	North American Mission Board	\$2,073,841	9.88%
	Theological Education Ministries	\$2,016,512	9.60%
	Christian Ethics & Religious Liberty Ministries	\$150,145	0.71%
Facilitating Ministries	\$272,084	1.30%	
Shared Ministries	Arkansas Baptist State Convention	\$118,083	
	Southern Baptist Convention	\$91,917	
TOTAL: SHARED MINISTRIES	\$210,000	1.00%	
Total Budget	TOTAL: 2017 UNIFIED COOPERATIVE PROGRAM BUDGET	\$21,000,000	100.00%

* Source: Arkansas Baptist State Convention

Arkansas Tech University (ATU) and online editor for the university's *The Arka Tech* newspaper. Hoisington recounted how he was "one of those unchurched" who had been reached through the ATU Baptist Collegiate Ministry (BCM). Brad Branham is BCM campus minister at ATU.

- Heard a Terminated Pas-

tor/Staff Assistance Committee report from Ed Simpson, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church, Little Rock. Simpson said from May 1, 2015, through April 30 of this year, five ministers received one-time assistance totaling \$6,869.44, and six ministers received assistance of up to four months in the amount of \$5,910.36, for a total amount

of assistance provided of \$12,779.80.

- Heard ministry updates from the Arkansas Baptist Children's Homes, the Arkansas Baptist Foundation, the *Arkansas Baptist News*, Camp Siloam, Ouachita Baptist University and Williams Baptist College.

Contact Tim Yarbrough at tim@arkansasbaptist.org.



Members of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention Finance Committee meet in Little Rock May 17 to discuss and recommend a \$21 million unified Cooperative Program budget for 2017. Photo by Tim Yarbrough

Appropriate tools key to user-friendly building

Lynn Riley
ABSC

MY DAD was a mechanic. He was a master at his craft, but when it came to other disciplines, he sometimes “improvised.” It was not uncommon for him to use a pipe wrench to drive a nail or a hacksaw to cut a piece of rope. His instruments of choice did the job, but the task would have been much easier if he had used the appropriate tool.

When designing a building, it is important that what you produce is appropriate for the task. Unfortunately, many churches seem to have adopted my dad’s philosophy. They use whatever is handy, even when there may be better resources available. They build based solely upon what they want, what they can afford or what is “pretty.” While appearance is important, functionality is more important. As you consider building, I would encourage you to think about the following:

Consider your purpose. Why do you exist as a church? Your facilities should reflect your purpose both in design and function. Buildings will either support your vision or dictate it. How do your church buildings facilitate worship? Discipleship? Fellowship? Ministry? Missions/evangelism? Plan with the understanding of who you are as a church and what you want to achieve. I once worked with a draftsman who was designing his first worship center. The plans he submitted were beautiful, but there was no choir loft or instrument bays. It was then that we discovered he was a member of a church that didn’t use music in its worship services! For this particular country Baptist church, his plans were not acceptable.

Consider first impressions. When others come to your church, what is their impression? To appeal to those who are not yet a part of your church family, make your facilities as guest-friendly as pos-

sible. Plan your site so that it is both accessible and visible. Create well-planned entrances to your property. Develop adequate parking – one space for every two expected attendees. Near major building entrances, create reserved parking for handicapped, guests and senior adults. Provide adequate signage clearly visible to passing traffic. Don’t

neglect landscaping and maintenance of buildings. Create a centrally located welcome center for guests. Preschool and children’s areas should be top priorities.

Consider functionality and flexibility. Are you designing “usable” space? A church can never have too much of three things – land, restrooms and storage. Allow for plenty of space for all three. Provide open areas, wide hallways and foyers to encourage fellowship opportunities. Discipleship expert Josh Hunt observed that people come to church for a lot of reasons, but they only stay for one reason – their friends. Incorporate those who will actually be using the space into the design process. They know best what they will need. Design rooms that can serve multiple functions. For example, a large room could be used for adult Sunday school on Sunday, after-school tutoring on Monday, TeamKid on Wednesday and a quilting class on Thursday. One veteran church designer recently said that he refuses to design buildings – even worship centers – that serve only one function.

Consider finances. What is it really going to cost? This question is usually only asked about initial construction, but long-term expense should also be considered. Construction and fixtures need not be extravagant to be quality, but money spent on the front-end can reap savings in the future. For example, tile is cheaper to install than carpet, but over a 10-year period, maintenance will be more than twice that of carpet. Zoned heating/cool-

ing may be more expensive but will ultimately pay for itself. Commercial grade fixtures may increase your initial cost, but will last longer than residential quality. “Bubba” down at the lumberyard may be able to get you a great deal on paneling, but sheetrock is more functional and durable. Don’t cut corners to save a dollar.

Consider the future. What’s next? While tradition is important to many churches, it has been said that God never calls us to the past. He always calls us to the future. Where do you go from here? Develop a master plan that considers future construction, land

See **TOOLS** page 9



Riley



NEW BUILDING – Rudy Baptist Church, Rudy, recently dedicated a new church building that was completed with the help of Nailbenders for Jesus. Several groups of Nailbenders put up the ceiling, hung sheetrock, built a stage, hung doors and trim, according to Mary Glass of Rudy Baptist. Men of the church did cleanup, staining, plumbing, adding hardware, moving dirt and moving furniture, among other things, she said. Women of the church assisted in clean up and moving furniture and supplies. “We had generous donations from our members, people in and around the community, and friends of the church. The Lord blessed and supplied our needs at every turn of the way,” Glass said. “To God be the glory, great things He has done! Also, the old church had steep steps. Now the elderly and handicapped have easy access to our church.”



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Church sign 'effective, inexpensive' form of advertising

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How signs work for you and your church:

- Signs indicate your presence.
- Signs can influence visitor habits.
- Signs help create an image of your church.
- Signs extend recall of your other advertising efforts.

- Signs develop a memory for a church location.

- Signs can help convert visitors to members.

So, what kind of sign do you need?

Some churches have opted to go beyond the traditional sign and used LED signs. While not for every church, an LED sign can increase awareness and visibility because of its uniqueness.

"As far as the value of the LED, we have found it to be indispensable. It has greatly added to our visibility, as we are located pretty far off the road. It has also been an excellent communicator for us as a church," said one pastor.

Good for 'business'

Most businesses already know the importance of a quality sign. Churches should too.

Good sign design begins with a survey of your location and building, or an analysis of the architectural design. Traffic volumes and patterns are noted. Visibility is considered.

The bottom line is that your sign company must be able to assure your sign's visibility and readability under standard conditions.

This information is blended with your name and logo, the architectural design of your building and your marketing plans to develop a street presentation unique and effective for your organization.

If you don't have a logo or unique type style, your sign company's professional designers can usually help develop one that you can use throughout your church and other advertising media to reinforce or "brand" your organization.

The sign must be large enough so the customer can read, react and stop safely. A sign package with low readability becomes little more than a

street address.

Make sure your signs will be designed to their maximum potential to keep your site "branded" and capable of influencing response, as well as complementing site architecture.

24/7 visibility

Signs are the most affordable means of advertising for many organizations — especially like churches that don't have a dollar to waste.

The SBA says, "Signs are the most effective, yet least expensive, form of advertising for the small business."

In the United States, there is an average of 1.35 occupants per car, and each car travels

about 15,000 miles per year. In addition, about 40 million Americans move annually to a new home. This mobility means your effective sign captures large viewing audiences.

Since our society is very mobile, consumer-oriented and communication-driven, an onsite sign functions as an important advertising and marketing device. And unlike advertising in the local newspaper or TV, once your sign is paid for, it turns into an excellent source of advertising and never-ending return on investment.

This article was adapted from an article that originally appeared on the website: acesigncompany.com/category/church-signs.

TOOLS

continued from page 8

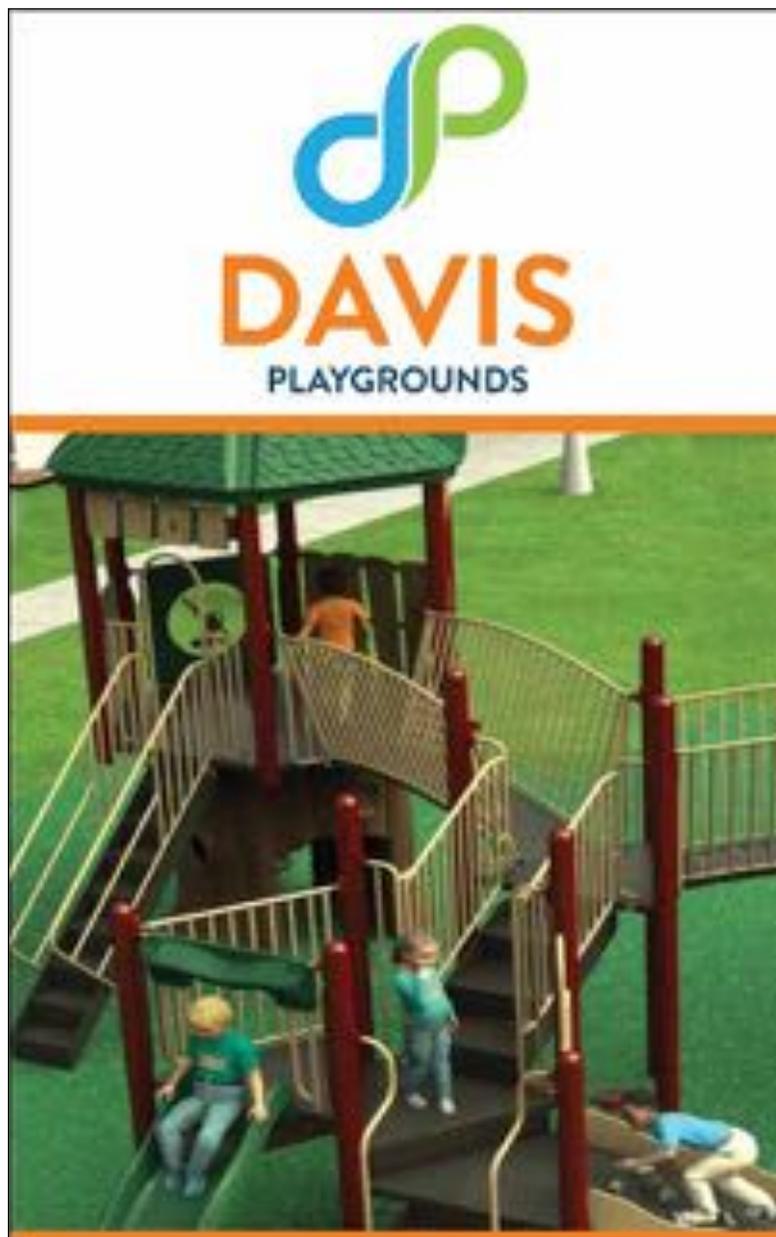
usage/acquisition and community dynamics. I ask churches to think three buildings into the future. Where will you put your next building? How about the one after that? The next one? Those other two buildings may never be built, but if they are not considered in

planning, then they may never be built. As you plan, never assume that this will be the last building you will build, but build something you can live with, because it may be the last building you build.

Buildings are simply tools to achieve the task God has placed before us. As you build, allow purpose, people and programming to guide you. Not only will you be pleased with the results, but also you will be pleasing to the Father as you do His ministry in a lost world.

Lynn Riley is a member of the evangelism and church health team of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention and works in the areas of Sunday school, church growth, smaller membership churches, and architecture/space analysis.

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Cooperation Agreements subject of online petition

A BLOG written by North American Mission Board (NAMB) President Kevin Ezell and an online petition to NAMB trustees, both published in the same week, highlighted the vital – yet sometimes precarious – relationship between the national agency and state conventions.

In a May 15 blog titled, “How NAMB-state convention Cooperation Agreements work,” Ezell wrote that NAMB has been entrusted with about \$120 million annually to help churches reach North America for Christ.

“The 27 non-south state conventions (out of a total of 42 state conventions) depend on NAMB for much of their ministry funding,” he wrote.

How the relationship between the national agency and state conventions work together is “spelled out in a ‘Strategic Cooperation Agreement,’” according to Ezell, who added that NAMB invited a small group of state convention executives “to help write the agreements with collaboration from NAMB staff.”

One sentence in the agreement stipulates confidentiality. “Any state, however, can opt to share its Cooperation Agreement and funding budget publicly by simply notifying NAMB,” he explained.

“Funding amounts for non-south states,” he wrote, “differ by state based upon convention size, lostness and other factors. Otherwise, all of the basic terms of the agreements

with the non-south states are the same in content.”

The May 16 online “Petition to NAMB trustees from Southern Baptists” – posted on the website sbctoday.com and signed by approximately 65 people – appealed for an independent investigation into questions about relationships between NAMB and state conventions and labeled the non-disclosure agreements as “gag orders.”

The petition drew attention to a months-long online grievance campaign launched by former state convention executive director Will McRaney against the national agency in general and Ezell in particular.

The Ezell blog mentioned neither the petition nor the McRaney controversy.

In June 2015 McRaney was terminated from his job as executive director of Maryland/Delaware State Convention (Mid-Atlantic Baptist Network). It was a position that

he had held for 21 months, and the termination, he said, “blind-sided” him. He subsequently wrote a series of “open letters” to air his grievances, including a letter

to NAMB trustees in February 2016, as well as letters to family and friends, Mid-Atlantic Baptist Network and the SBC family. All of the letters were published online.

Within hours of McRaney’s open letter to NAMB trust-

ees, a response letter, again published online, was written by NAMB trustees, describing McRaney’s letter as “factually inaccurate and misleading.”

The online back-and-forth continued the third week of May 2016 with the publication of the NAMB president’s blog, promising “excellence and accountability . . . when it comes to the stewardship of resources that God and Southern Baptists entrust to us” and the petition, alleging “pressure tactics, strong-arming, national level interference with state level personnel decisions, or the purchase of silence” by NAMB.

Contacted about the petition, Mike Ebert, NAMB vice president for communications, said it is possible the issue will be taken up during a scheduled NAMB board of trustees meeting June 13 in St. Louis, held in conjunction with the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention.

“As I understand it, the petition is directed at our trustees so this might possibly be an item they consider at their upcoming meeting in June. I

haven’t heard that it is on the agenda,” said Ebert.

He added the public portion of the NAMB meeting starts at 3 p.m. at the Hyatt Regency St. Louis at the Arch, 315 Chestnut St., St. Louis.

This article was compiled from

reporting by the Arkansas Baptist News, along with information that originally appeared on three websites: namb.net/whatever-it-takes-blog, sbctoday.com/petition-to-namb-trustees-from-southern-baptists and willmcraney.com/open-letter.



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Ouachita honors 331 graduates, awards Kircher doctorate

ARKADELPHIA – Celebrating Ouachita Baptist University's 129th spring commencement on May 14, university officials conferred a total of 337 degrees on 331 graduates, including Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science, Bachelor of Music, Bachelor of Music Education and Bachelor of Fine Arts degrees as well as Ouachita's first Associate of Arts degrees earned through the university's Ouachita at New Life Church program.

This year's graduating class featured 142 honor graduates, including 21 who graduated summa cum laude with a grade point average (GPA) of

3.95 or higher, 54 who graduated magna cum laude (3.75 GPA) and 67 who graduated cum laude (3.5 GPA). University officials also recognized 14 graduates who completed Ouachita's Carl Goodson Honors Program and 32 members of the Alpha Chi national honor society. Also honored were three graduates who were commissioned with the rank of second lieutenant in the U.S. Army: Benjamin Adcock, Joseph Hughes and Noah Myers.

Senior class President Jacob Moreno Robles, a nutrition/dietetics major from Mexico City, led the commencement

invocation. Scripture reading was led by three students from the Pruet School of Christian Studies: Haylee Garland, a Christian studies/Christian ministries and psychology double major from Ward; Elizabeth Peevy, a Christian studies/Christian missions major from Bryant; and Amber Williams, a Christian studies/Christian missions major from Mount Vernon.

Charles Wright, interim president, also recognized Nathan Lowman, a history major from Little Rock, who is a fourth-generation Ouachita graduate dating back 95 years to his great-grandfather's graduation in 1921.

Wright presented Larry Kircher, a longtime member of the Ouachita board of trustees, with an honorary doctor of humanities degree on behalf of fellow trustees. Board members voted earlier this year to honor Kircher, a 1965 Ouachita graduate, in recognition of his "outstanding labors in business, civic and church life, as well as his generous and loyal service to his alma mater."

"It is with a very grateful heart that I stand in front



of you today," Kircher said. "Ouachita has meant a great deal to me and has made the difference in my life over the years."

Citing Jeremiah 29:11, he told the graduating class, "God does have a plan for you and His plan is to prosper you and to give you hope for a future."

Encouraging graduates to give their alma mater "your undying support," he said, "One of your obligations will be to always give a cheer for Ouachita; you need to speak highly of Ouachita. Who better to recruit new students to Ouachita than those who have just finished their education here?"

Kircher, who began serving at Citizens Bank of Bald Knob in 1969, retired as president of the bank in 2014 after 45 years of service. Dedicated to serving his community, he

founded the White County Community Foundation, co-founded the Bald Knob Public Education Foundation and the White County Single Parent Scholarship Fund and has served nearly 50 years as a deacon and treasurer at Central Baptist Church of Bald Knob. In addition to serving eight terms on the Ouachita board of trustees, he has served on the boards of Arkansas' Independent Colleges and Universities, Arkansas Bankers Association and American Bankers Association.

He and his wife, Molly, a 1964 Ouachita graduate, have two daughters, six grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. The Kirchers have supported numerous projects and capital campaigns at Ouachita, including funding, among others, the Kircher Endowed Scholarship.

Ark. Baptists to be nominated for service at SBC in St. Louis

ST. LOUIS – Five Arkansas Baptists are included among those nominated to serve on various Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) denominational boards, agencies and seminaries. The nominations were selected and announced by the 2016 SBC Committee on Nominations.

Nominees will serve if elected by the messengers to the 2016 SBC Annual Meeting June 14-15 in St. Louis.

SBC Executive Committee – Nominated to a term to expire in 2019: Harry C. "Archie" Mason, pastor, Central Baptist Church, Jonesboro, replacing Clay Hallmark, Marion, who resigned. Nominated to a term to expire in 2018: Stephen L. Goss, layperson and member of First Baptist

Church, Bentonville, replacing Andy Wilson, Springdale, who resigned.

GuideStone – Nominated to a term to expire in 2018: David Rainwater, layperson and member of Immanuel Baptist Church, Little Rock, replacing William H. "Buddy" Sutton, Little Rock, who is deceased.

Southwestern Seminary – Nominated to serve for a second term: Danny L. Johnson, Bryant.

New Orleans Seminary – Nominated to a term to expire in 2017: Larry D. White, director of missions, Faulkner Baptist Association and member of Central Baptist Church, Conway, replacing Gary L. Hollingsworth, Little Rock, who resigned.



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Romans 12:2 (ESV)

Transgender bathroom controversy discussed

Margaret Colson
Arkansas Baptist News

HOW SHOULD Arkansas Baptists respond to the national uproar regarding transgender bathrooms, particularly in light of the recent escalation in the controversy when President Barack Obama signed a "guidance letter" directing public schools to give transgender persons access to bathrooms of their choice at the risk of losing federal funds?

In ABN Podcast 50, host Bill Bumpas interviews Larry Page, executive director of the Arkansas Faith and Ethics Council, about an appropriate Christian response to this contemporary issue.

According to Page, the guidance letter signed by Obama has "no force of law," further describing the letter as a "bag of hot air" . . . intended to "intimidate school districts and states and local locales into compliance with this 'mandate' that they want to look like a mandate."

"What they did (with the letter) is laughable in legal terms," he said.

In Washington D.C., "commonsense is simply in no abundance whatsoever," he

asserted, while applauding Arkansas Gov. Asa Hutchinson for encouraging school districts in the Natural State to "disregard" the letter.

"He is on very firm legal ground," he said. "I am glad there are people like Gov. Hutchinson who are saying, 'Enough already!'" regarding states' rights as outlined in the 10th Amendment in the U.S. Constitution.

Page noted that the issue extends beyond bathrooms to include locker rooms and showers, saying that it is not an "unreasonable expectation" to think that ultimately a boy might be allowed to shower in a school's locker room intended for girls. "That is nearly total insanity," emphasized Page.

"It's time to recalibrate; this is about more than this particular issue. This is a clear manifestation of a federal government run amok, almost totally out of control," he said.

"It's time for the people - it's time for the people - to take a stand," he said in the 17-minute podcast.

It is important in today's cultural climate for church leaders to update their church policies regarding such is-



issues as traditional marriage and gender-specific policies. Clearly basing such policies on "deeply held religious beliefs" helps churches defend religious liberties through the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, he believes.

Saying he is non-partisan, Page also urges all Christians to "pay close attention to the people we elect" because of their widespread influence both locally and nationally as well as be aware of ballot issues.

"Politics is not the 'be-all and end-all,' but it is an important part of setting policy," he said.

Referencing Matthew 5:13-16, he said Christians should "engage culture in right and appropriate ways," as well as follow the leadership of their pastors, whom he called on to

speak clear biblical truth from the pulpit.

Page also referenced an article in the April 21, 2016, edition of *Arkansas Baptist News*, "The problem with teaching children transgenderism," in which he highlighted a report issued by the American College of Pediatricians (ACP). The ACP, he said, "to their credit," in this "politically correct, crazy age," stated that "we find that teaching children that transgenderism is normal is - and these are their words - tantamount to child abuse."

This conclusion, he said, is based on the finding that gender dysphoria is a psychological problem.

To listen to the podcast, go to arkansasbaptist.org/abn-podcast50.

Contact Margaret Colson at margaret@arkansasbaptist.org.



The Watercooler

"Wanna thank you for that Bible as it is helpful in discovering a few phrases from and shedding more light on what the King James Version reads - God will lift up your heart as you begin to realize that 'He thru Christ has reconciled (sic) man unto Himself' (II Corinthians)."

- Bob Dylan

In an article featured on cbn.com, a website associated with the Christian Broadcasting Network, a handwritten letter

written by musician Bob Dylan highlights his "strong Christian faith." According to the May



Dylan

19 article, the letter, most likely written in April of 1980 and filled with references to Christianity, will soon be up for auction. According to cbn.com reports, "Dylan concludes the letter with a bold profession of faith: 'Always in the name of Jesus Christ Son of God, Manifest in the flesh.'"

"When we go in church and I drink the little wine, which is about the only wine I drink, and I eat the little cracker - I guess that's a form of asking forgiveness."

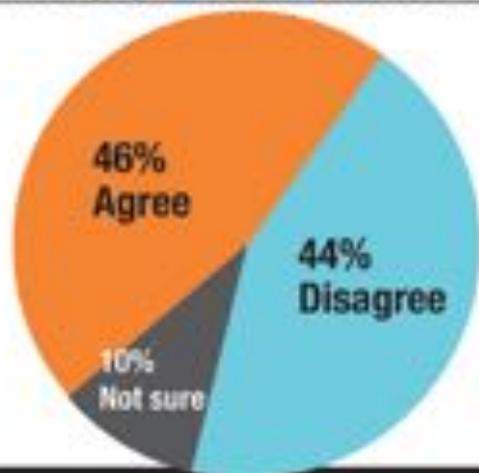
- Donald Trump

In an article titled "Trump to meet with evangelical leaders in June," CNN reports on a special meeting being planned by presidential candidate Donald Trump. According to the article, Trump will meet with evangelical leaders from across the country June 21 in New York City. The meeting will be an attempt by Trump to garner evangelical support prior to the general election. See related story on page 1.

LIFEWAY RESEARCH

Among Protestant Pastors

The rapid growth in recent decades of the inmate population in America is unjust.



Among Protestant Pastors

Five top barriers churches face in expanding prison ministry:



About two-thirds of pastors cite a lack of training (62 percent) or volunteers (65 percent) as barriers to their church helping inmates and their families.

MEETING

continued from page one

Members of the steering committee will question Trump before the larger meeting, but logistics and details of the gatherings were still being communicated as of press-time, Floyd said. The meeting is billed as an opportunity to share information, values, principles and beliefs.

"We want to talk to Mr. Trump humbly. He doesn't need to hear us preach. He needs to hear our heart," Floyd said. "We need to talk to him about what matters to us. The term 'evangelical' is not a voting block. The term 'evangelical' is a name tag, a declaration of who we are, about various truths of the Scripture."

U.S. Supreme Court nomination opportunities, the sanctity of human life, religious liberty and racial reconciliation are topics Floyd hopes to address in the meeting. He expects to be able to invite other Southern Baptists to the meeting, he said, but is awaiting details.

Two former SBC presidents, Jack Graham, pastor of Prestonwood Baptist Church in Plano, Texas, and Ed Young, pastor of Second Baptist Church in Houston, are other prominent Southern Baptists already involved in the venture.

The meeting is not designed to endorse a particular candidate, and Floyd is not aware that any members of the steering committee have endorsed or taken sides against Trump.

Floyd said he doesn't know where the meeting will lead, but he encouraged Southern Baptists to continue to demonstrate love during this political season.

"Regardless of how passionate they are about all this, we

don't need to judge one another for where people may be and have various positions. There are many Southern Baptists who have supported Donald Trump, and there may be many others who end up supporting Donald Trump, and we don't need to cast suspicion on people that do," Floyd said. "And if we speak out, we need to speak out about the issues, and we need to be very careful that we speak out in a spirit of love and we do so in a way that honors God."

Trump's rise to the top of a crowded Republican slate of 17 candidates was unexpected, Floyd said, but evidently indicative of the mood of the nation.

"People can say what they want about Mr. Trump, and they can have their personal opinion, but it is unquestionable that he is speaking to the heart of the American public, or else he would have never" surpassed the other candidates, Floyd said. "America is desperate for leadership."

"Mr. Trump has a very demonstrative way to lead. He led with extreme boldness along the way, making statements that people thought would never be received, but they have been received, embraced and endorsed by many people, and that's why they have voted for him so aggressively and generously."

Floyd said he and other Southern Baptists have a responsibility to participate in the political process.

"Evangelicals cannot sit this out," he said. "I think we have a biblical responsibility, and I think we have a responsibility as citizens of the United States to participate and be a part of the political processes of this country. Men and women have died on the battlefields all across this world so that I might have that liberty and

that privilege, and I will take that privilege always with humility and give honor to our nation, regardless of where our nation is, because I think it's the right thing to do."

Christians must pray, vote and be willing to treat with respect whomever God chooses

as the nation's next leader, Floyd noted.

United In Purpose, responsible for many logistics of the meeting, was not available for comment.

Among United In Purpose partners are Americans United for Life, the Iowa Association

of Regular Baptist Churches, CatholicVote.org., the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference, Liberty University, Regent University, Tea Party Express, The Frederick Douglas Foundation, Unity Coalition for Israel and the Kitchen Cabinet.



Acts 1:8

One Day Mission Trip

OCTOBER 1, 2016
FORT SMITH, AR

Join other Arkansas Baptists from across the state for the 2016 One Day Mission Trip to the Concord Baptist Association in Fort Smith and surrounding areas.

Cost: \$10 per person

Registration and more information is available

at absc.org/oneday or contact:

Kathy Hensley | khensley@absc.org

Tracy Archibald | tarchibald@absc.org

Breck Freeman | bfreeman@absc.org

501-376-4791, ext. 5150

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 **Arkansas**
BAPTISTS

Obituaries

Mel B. Garner, 90, of Arkadelphia, died May 16 in Little Rock following a brief illness.



Garner was active with the Lighthouse Ministries at Red River Baptist Association in Arkadelphia where she served as a volunteer for many years.

She was a member of Park Hill Baptist Church, Arkadelphia, serving as the church organist and as a choir member. For many years, she was also involved with the church nursery. She was preceded in death by her husband, Steve Garner, a daughter, a great-grandchild, two sisters and one brother.

Survivors are a daughter, a sister, eight grandchildren, six great-grandchildren and two great-great grandchildren.

Funeral services were held May 18 at Park Hill Baptist Church, followed by interment at Rest Haven Memorial Gardens in Arkadelphia.



Matt Weaver at New Orleans Seminary.

Matt Weaver completes master's degree at NOBTS

NEW ORLEANS – Matt Weaver of Pine Bluff received the Master of Theological Studies degree May 14 at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

Weaver, senior pastor at South Side Baptist Church in Pine Bluff, is married to Carrie Weaver. He is the son of Phillip and Linda Weaver from Pine Bluff.

Weaver has two Bachelor of Arts degrees from Williams Baptist College.



PRAYER MARATHON – As part of an effort to unify area churches and Christians, the Boone County Bible Reading Marathon began April 28 with a breakfast and program. Boone County Judge Robert Hathaway read a proclamation to initiate the daily reading from April 28 to May 5.

STEWARDSHIP TIP

CHARITABLE GIFTS FROM YOUR IRA

The rules and regulations surrounding Individual Retirement Accounts ("IRAs") are very complicated and seem to constantly change. In 2015, Congress made a change that is beneficial for those with IRAs and charities alike. Under the Protecting Americans from Tax Hikes Act of 2015, the Qualified Charitable Distribution ("QCD") tax extender was made permanent (for now). For those who are making charitable gifts to their church or other favorite charities, you might consider make those gifts through a QCD. By giving through your IRA in this manner, the distribution goes directly to the charity and the individual can satisfy all or a portion of the individual's Required Minimum Distribution.

If you have questions concerning Qualified Charitable Distributions, contact us using the information below.

10 Remington Drive • Little Rock, AR 72204
501.376.4791 • 800.838.2272 • info@abf.org • www.abf.org

ARKANSAS BAPTIST
Foundation



Houseparents needed: Boys Ranch, Harrison.

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

Houseparents needed: Children's Homes, Monticello.

Contact: Randy Luper
at (870) 367-5358 or
rluper@abchomes.org.

These full-time positions include salary, housing, medical and life insurance and paid leave.

For more Across Arkansas news visit arkansasbaptist.org

Classifieds

PASTOR

Seeking **bi-vocational pastor**. Send resumes to cornerstone.cabot@gmail.com or P.O. Box 935 Cabot AR 72023.

Mount Vernon Baptist Church at Mount Vernon, Arkansas, is seeking a **full-time pastor**. Letter/resume to: MVBC Pastor Search Team, P.O. Box 71, Romance, AR 72136 email: mtvernonpastorsearch@gmail.com.

First Baptist Church of Marion, Arkansas, is prayerfully seeking God's man for the position of **senior pastor**. Applicant must have substantial leadership/ministry experience in a mid-size to large Southern Baptist Church. Qualified applicants should send resumes to: firstmarionsearch@yahoo.com.

Shiloh Baptist Church (SBC), Rover, Mo., 17 miles east of West Plains, seeking **bi-vocational pastor**. Worship attendance about 70, median age about 35. Send resumes to: Lyndell Huddleston, HC 61, West Plains, MO 65775.

First Baptist Church, London, AR seeks **full-time Southern Baptist pastor** after former pastor served 23 years. Accepting resumes now through August 1 by e-mail (fbclondon.com) or mail (17 Southern Baptist Rd., London, AR 72847) Attn: Pastor Search Committee.

Due to retirement of our pastor of 30 years, First Baptist Church, Flippin, AR is accepting resumes for a **full-time pastor** who is spirit led, loves all ages, and ready to serve God in north central Arkansas. Send resumes to Search Team, PO Box 637, Flippin, AR 72634 or fbclippin@hotmail.com.

FBC accepting applications **full-time pastor**. Letter/resume to First Baptist Church P.O. Box 789 Marshall, AR 72650 email: mfbcoffice@gmail.com.

Bi-vocational senior pastor position at Reynolds Park Baptist Church, P.O. Box 1828, Paragould, AR 72451, reynoldsparkbaptist@gmail.com. Mail or email resume to Attn: Search Committee.

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

OTHER STAFF POSITIONS

Hillcrest Baptist Church in Lebanon, Mo., is accepting resumes for **minister of youth/family life**. Send resume to pveanes@lebanon.k12.mo.us or call David Veanes at 417-532-1021.

LR area – Col. Glenn – 5 mi. w of I-430: Small country church seeking **part time**

music leader: Send resume to Martindale Bapt Ch, 18900 Col. Glenn, LR, AR 72210 or Email harrisw12@yahoo.com.

First Baptist Church, Pea Ridge is looking for a **part-time children's ministry director** to lead Children's Ministry, birth – 6th grade. Please submit resumes to cody@prfbc.org.

Sugarloaf Baptist Church in Heber Springs is currently accepting resumes for position of **full-time student minister**. Person will be responsible for students 7th-12th grade. Send resumes to: sugarloafbaptistchurch@gmail.com or mail : Attn: Youth Search Sugarloaf Baptist Church, 699 Wilburn Road, Heber Springs, Arkansas, 72543. Call Tony Criswell at 501-362-2448.

Praying for a **part-time youth minister!** Send Resumes to South Main Baptist Church, PO Box 430, Crossett, AR 71635; or email at SMBCSecretary@windstream.net. Visit our website at Southmainbaptist.net.

Westside Baptist Church, Natchitoches, Louisiana is seeking a **full-time student pastor** to lead & disciple Middle School and Senior High Students. Submit resume to Steve McAlister, Pastor at steve@westside.life.

Mountain Top Cowboy Church, Heber Springs, is looking for a **bi-vocational worship leader** to play the acoustic

guitar and lead our congregation in singing country flavored old hymns. Interested candidates may contact church office, call 501-365-3690.

Eagle Heights Baptist Church is accepting resumes for a **full-time student pastor**. Send resumes to EHBC, 703 E. Walters, Harrison, AR 72601 or email to ehbadmin@eagleheightsharrison.org. Job description is available at ehbharrison.org.

FBC McRae seeking **bi-vocational minister of youth**. Interested parties please submit your resumes via email to kfowler2123@yahoo.com or by mail to FBC McRae, 703 E Second St., McRae, AR 72102. Person applying needs to be available Sundays (morning and evening), Wednesday evenings and other times for various youth activities, including camps in the summer.

Tallowood Baptist Church, Houston, Texas, is seeking a dynamic **minister to serve a diverse, metropolitan, student community**. Responsibilities include leadership and supervision of associate staff and development of a creative and biblically based ministry to students. A minimum of 5 years experience in student ministry is required and experience serving multiple high schools is strongly preferred. Formal theological training required. Resumes may be sent to smsearch@tallowood.org.

tallowood.org.

Soaring Wings Christian Home and Ranch seeks a Christian couple as **full-time house parents** to provide long-term care for seven to 10 children, including own, in a Christ-centered home. For more information, email jason@soaringwing-ranch.com or visit www.swranch.org.

Southern Heights Baptist Church, Berryville, is seeking a **full-time worship leader**. Please send resumes to Personnel Committee, 279 Highway 221 S., Berryville, AR 72616 or shbc@shbc.arcoxmail.com. Website: <http://www.myshbc.net>.

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

MISCELLANEOUS

For Sale: **AmeriGlide Hercules II 600 Vertical Wheelchair Platform Lift**. 110 volt. 36 inch vertical lift. Installation, operation manual included. Barely used. \$4,000.00. 870-863-3336.

For more Across Arkansas news visit arkansasbaptist.org

Looking to fill a staff position at your church?

Visit arkansasbaptist.org/ad to submit your classified!

JUNE 12, 2016

It was night as our story begins. Samuel lay down in the temple near the Ark of the Covenant while Eli rested in an adjacent room. Three times Samuel heard a voice, and three times he rose to ask Eli what he needed. We know that God was speaking to young Samuel, but he did not. Not even Eli understood. Finally he did understand and instructed Samuel to respond openly to God's voice.

We can think about this story in a number of ways. Think first of the ease in which we may miss the call of God. While waiting for the "right" time, we may miss the time of God's choosing. Some insist on great emotional moments; while waiting for the shout, we may miss the whisper – the still small voice of eternity. Perhaps waiting for something instantaneous, we miss the gentle nudging and slow awakening.

Another way of seeing this is the realization that God doesn't always choose the way we assume God will choose. The anticipated leaders would have

been the sons of Eli. But their immature decisions disqualified them. Think of Jacob, Joseph, Moses and David in the Old Testament. In the New Testament, Jesus called fishermen, hated tax collectors and even a persecutor of the church. God can call anyone into kingdom ministry.

Think also about the difficulty in saying Yes to the call and obeying the call. Samuel's call was hard to hear. It was even harder to speak. He was required by the call to speak judgment against Eli and his sons. That was no easy task. The prophetic role is never easy. Other great prophets, such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Amos, would follow Samuel's model of faithfulness. And their work was equally hard.

Truly our God is a God of surprise. The call often comes to people we least expect, when we least expect it and in ways we could not anticipate. Our calling, as God's Church, is to encourage the hearing of God's voice. We are to call out the called.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Called

1 SAMUEL 3:1-10, 17-21, NASB

Lee McGlone
Arkadelphia

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

Transformed in my prayer

MATTHEW 6:9-15, NIV

Melissa Kirk
Pocahontas

Years ago, my husband, Larry, bought a motorcycle. My first ride on the back of the motorcycle was exciting, but I didn't like the fact that I wasn't in control. What if I flew off?

I wanted to ride, though, so one day, I pulled into the motorcycle dealership, bought my own bike and asked directions to the nearest beginner class.

The first hint that this wasn't the wisest move for me was when the instructor said, "Ride without a helmet. It won't help you." The second hint was always reaching for the non-existent seatbelt.

Confirmation that I wasn't cut out for this type of recreational travel happened when we rode curvy Highway 9. With just a few minutes into the pigtail style ride, my inexperience caused panic to set in. I prayed every prayer, recited every Bible verse and sang every vacation Bible school song I thought of. I whispered, "Thank you, Lord," when we reached our destination.

The relief lasted only until we had to return by way of the same road. Half-

way back, out of prayers and unable to see through a flood of tears, I found a narrow strip to pull over. I tried to regain my composure as the backed-up traffic passed by. It took all I could muster to finish the ride. I had never been so frightened in my life.

That experience gave me a healthier respect for my personal safety. More importantly, it helped transform my prayer life. Praying myself out of messes wasn't what God desired. He wanted an earlier meaningful conversation that would have allowed me to hear Him point out better uses of my money for His kingdom work.

If I had been following Jesus' example called the Lord's Prayer, I would have driven past the motorcycle shop when I prayed Matthew 6:13 (NIV), "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one." Bikes aren't bad; the problem is me on a bike.

God wants to talk with you and me about what is important to Him. He will be glorified. We will be blessed – and safe.

JUNE 19, 2016

All humanity is designed to worship, that is, we have the capacity to recognize something grander than ourselves that is beyond ourselves. Christian faith declares that the God of Scripture is alone the object of our worship. Dagon, one of the Philistine gods, could not stand against the God of Israel. Our text declares that not all gods are equal, indeed, that human-designed idols are not gods at all.

Much has been said in recent years about how to worship. Should we use classic hymns or contemporary choruses? Worship bands or choirs? Liturgical reverence or warm-hearted informality? The answer to each question is Yes. While our debate has centered on styles of worship, we have all too often missed the point that worship is about assigning worth to God – regardless of stylistic distinctions. The commandment is clear in Exodus 20:3,5 (NASB), "You shall have no other gods before Me ... You shall not worship them or serve them." That includes our personal tastes.

We can admire the reception given to

the arrival of the Ark of the Covenant at Beth-Shemesh. The people were busy in the fields, reaping the harvest of wheat. But when they saw the Ark of the Covenant – the most significant symbol of God's presence among them – on its

return to Israel, the routine day gave way to spontaneous worship. An altar was built; sacrifices were given, and joy filled the air. Sight of the Ark stoked chords of glad memories of past days and called the people to a renewed faith. That is what happens when God's presence is made known to us. Our worship is a testimony to the world, even to the Philistines, of God's grace and eternal presence.

The heavenly image in John's vision touches our hearts deeply. "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God, the Almighty, who was and who is and who is to come ... Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created" (Rev. 4:8, 11, NASB). Only God is worthy of worship!

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Worthy!

1 SAMUEL 5:1-6; 6:11-16, NASB

Lee McGlone
Arkadelphia

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

Transformed in my possessions

MATTHEW 6:19-24, NIV

Melissa Kirk
Pocahontas

I'd just made the bed and was picking up dirty clothes when I heard the bed springs squeak. I looked up to see my 2-year-old grandson, Bostyn, jumping as high as he could, trying to grab the ceiling fan. Catching him midair, I put him on the floor and re-gathered the clothes.

Outside the bedroom, I discovered him sitting on the kitchen bar, playing with an ink pen. He'd used the computer as a stool to climb his way up. I scolded him and put him down, before pushing the unit under the desk. Confident any further temptation was removed, I headed to the washer.

Passing the bathroom, I spotted him balancing over the sink, his feet bouncing and hands splashing soapy water everywhere. That time, he received a finger-shaking stop-it-right-now reprimand. I planted his feet firmly on the ground and my hands on my hips.

He took off. Rounding the corner, he scaled the kitchen table leg. Little hands and knees pattered across lunch's leftover spaghetti plate to the opposite side of the table. Remem-

bering the water was still running in the bathroom, I ran to turn it off. In the few seconds that I was gone, he had climbed down and was scooting the chair toward the stove, dragging a stream of spilled juice with him.

I swooped him up and carried him into the living room, where we sunk to the floor. His over-stimulated, tired body wiggled and kicked while I held on tight, and the tears flowed – partly mine!

Matthew 6: 21 (NIV) says, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." At some point, we've all been like Bostyn, investing our time and resources in what we thought would give us satisfaction, only to discover the pleasure of this world was temporary and tiresome.

The beginning of Matthew 6:20 (NIV) says, "But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven..."

True contentment comes when we put God first and commit every possession to His kingdom work. He promises to make those efforts last for eternity.

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