



Turner announces plans to retire



Turner (at podium) announces his plans to retire as executive director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, effective February 2013. He has served in the position since 1996.

Tim Yarbrough
Arkansas Baptist News

LITTLE ROCK – Emil Turner, executive director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC) since 1996, will retire effective February 2013.

Turner announced his intention to retire at the Aug. 2 meeting of the ABSC Executive Board.

“For almost 16 years, Mary and I have enjoyed the privilege of serving the Southern Baptist churches of Arkansas; we have enjoyed the kindness of the pastors and the tolerance of the church members and have enjoyed the friendship of the other

ABSC entity leaders,” said Turner. “I have been the beneficiary of the competence and hard work of the ABSC staff members. We are grateful for each kindness shown us by these good people. But Mary and I have prayed about this decision and have concluded that my most effective ministry service at this time will be found in some other capacity,” Turner continued.

“We have been treated with grace and compassion by Arkansas Baptists, and I will miss serving the churches as executive director,” he said.

See **TURNER** page 6

Benton church serves in Peru

Wild goose chases or divine appointments?

Kate Gregory
International Mission Board

CHOSICA, Peru – Was he on a set of wild goose chases or divine appointments? At first, Trevor Nix wasn’t sure.

The 18-year-old traveled to Peru with eight members of Highland Heights Baptist Church, Benton, to be part of a 60-person International World Changers (IWC) team of six U.S. churches July 14-20. Their goal was to be the advance team for a newly trained set of local church planters to start Bible studies in a neighborhood of 30,000 people. But first, they had to find people’s homes.

That task was made more difficult in the hillside community of Quirio, where homes are built row upon row up the hill. Unmarked dirt

roads merge, community stairs wind halfway up until the paths become trails of boulders.

Families gave the students their addresses, but when those mainly consisted of “up high,” “up the hill” or “next to the orange house” in a patchwork of variously colored homes, that didn’t give the students much to go on.

So, Trevor’s group just started walking, hoping they would recognize someone they had met the day before at an IWC-sponsored soccer tournament where the students had taken family photos of the attendees. For home visits the next day, they carried printed photographs to deliver to more than 100 families.

“We found a woman who didn’t have to look at the addresses to tell us where people lived; she

See **PERU** page 3



Highland Heights Baptist students pray in Peruvian home.

What's the Cooperative Program?

Learn about the Cooperative Program and how your giving helps fulfill the Great Commission in Arkansas and around the world.

See pages 9-13



Dentist going strong after 60 years

Leah Fender
Arkansas Baptist News

SEARCY – For many people, retirement has long since set in by age 86, but for dentist J.D. Patterson, retirement hasn’t even crossed his mind.

“Retirement is not an option,” smiled Patterson, who is a member of Valley Baptist Church, Searcy. “I am going to keep working as long as the Lord lets me.”

True to his word, the day before the celebration of his 60 years of dental practice, he saw 24 patients – five of those even

required surgical extractions.

“I love working and feel that I can help someone every day,” Patterson said. “Coming to work each day is what keeps me feeling young.”

J.D. Patterson’s father, Jessie, established Patterson Dentistry in 1917. J.D. took over the business July 7, 1952.

“We are thrilled to have such a long family history of dentistry in Searcy,” said Beth Patterson, daughter of J.D. Patterson and pediatric dentist.

In fact, according to his other daughter, Amy Patterson, Pat-

erson Dentistry is the longest-tenured active dentistry practice in Arkansas’ history as far as she can find.

“I don’t know what we’re going to do when Dr. Patterson leaves us,” said Gary Lynch, a former employee of Patterson and a current patient. “My family and I have literally been seeing him (Patterson) for 50 years. We can’t imagine seeing anyone else for dental work.”

Not only does Patterson help out human patients, but he regu-

See **DENTIST** page 2

The story lives on ...

WMU kicks off year of celebration at Wellspring

Leah Fender
Arkansas Baptist News

LITTLE ROCK – More than 300 women gathered at First Baptist Church in Little Rock July 27-28 to participate in the third annual Wellspring – Connecting Arkansas Women’s conference.

“I loved it! I look forward to this every year,” said Linda Kucia, Wellspring participant and member of Ebenezer Baptist Church, Warren.

The theme of the event was Live Sent.

“(It) is based on the book by Jason C. Dukes,” said Debbie Moore, Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC) women’s missions and ministry consultant. “The idea is that no matter what walk of life you’re currently in, our words and actions should breathe the gospel every day. You don’t have to be a missionary to make a difference.”

“The Great Commission calls all of us to live sent. ... We are women of God called to live sent in the 21st century. We must live out our faith where we are, taking Christ into our communities and the world each day,” said speaker Laura Macfarlan, member of First Baptist Church of Siloam Springs and founder of Cross My Heart Ministry.

The conference began Friday and continued through Saturday. Participants had an opportunity to fellowship and worship with each other, while learning about missions and how to carry out their faith.

“I learned so much (at Well-

spring),” said Kucia. “I especially enjoyed hearing from women who have been in the mission field and what they’ve been doing.”

Participants were given the opportunity to attend three breakout sessions facilitated by female leaders, such as Stacey Smith, North American Mission Board Mission Service Corps missionary and former inmate of the Arkansas Department of Correction; Ginger Schultz, former missionary in Northern Africa and the Middle East and current missionary in east Tennessee, and Kristy Carr, Woman’s Missionary Union (WMU) ministry consultant. Topics of interest included human exploitation, engaging young women for Christ, Christian Women’s Job Corps and strategic missions, among others.

Harriet Aylor, Wellspring participant and member of First Baptist Church, Mountain Home, said she enjoyed hearing about Schultz’s experience as a missionary in the Middle East.

“Her story was so different from anything I have ever heard,” said Aylor. “She told us several stories about her experiences with trying to get Muslims to understand the difference between Muhammad and Jesus. That’s got to be tough.”

April Knopp, a member of Central Baptist Church, North Little Rock, said she really enjoyed hearing from Stacey Smith.

“Her story was remarkable, and she was such a real example of how God



Wellspring participants make blankets for children and teenagers for Arkansas Children’s Hospital.

can take any circumstance and turn it around for His glory,” said Knopp. “Her story of being in prison and then using that experience to bring people to Christ is simply amazing.”

Martha Huffman, member of First Baptist Church, Mountain Home, attended Wellspring for the first time.

“I came to get some training on how to reach younger women and get them involved in missions,” said Huffman. “I came away with some really good ideas and look forward to getting them going at our church.”

In addition to breakout sessions, participants were encouraged to take part in one-day mission projects on Saturday that included cleaning and organizing the Dorcas House and Promise House; sorting, labeling and repackaging food for distribution at the Rice Depot, and making blankets for children and teenagers at Arkansas Children’s Hospital.

This weekend wasn’t all about missions though. Participants also spent time simply worshiping together.

One Accord, a Christian four-woman praise band, led all the worship sessions.

“They were great,” said Aylor. “Their music is just incredible, and they truly put your heart into the worship mode.”

Christian humorists Jana McKnight and Vickey Lloyd also were featured during the event.

As part of Wellspring, WMU held its annual meeting on Saturday and announced Diane Blackwood will serve as Arkansas WMU president for the second year. They also announced their new executive board.

Overall, the conference was a success, said Diane Parker, ABSC missions support team leader.

“We (missions support team) are privileged to provide Wellspring for Arkansas women. Our goal for the event is to provide an opportunity to be challenged, educated, inspired and called to missions and ministry. Because of the excellent program personnel, we believe that goal was accomplished,” Parker said.

Contact Leah Fender at leah@arkansasbaptist.org.



ABN online
View a photo slideshow
of the Wellspring conference at
www.arkansasbaptist.org



DENTIST

continued from page one

larly works on the teeth of some four-legged animals.

“I raise Black Angus cattle,” Patterson said. “Since cows’ teeth wear down from eating grass, dirt and gravel, I wanted to find a way to prolong the life of their teeth and in turn increase their production life. So I started capping my cows’ teeth.”

“It may sound a little strange – capping cows’ teeth – but he (Patterson) raises some good beef,” said Suzanne Floyd, office manager for Patterson Dentistry.

In addition to sustaining a successful dental practice, for cows and people, Patterson has played a part in numerous ministries around the world and in Arkansas.

“I have been on 22 mission trips in my lifetime and (to) 20 countries,” Patterson said.

He says his true love, however,



Ouachita Baptist University President Rex Horne (right) and his wife, Becky, attended the 60th anniversary celebration of Patterson Dentistry in Searcy.

is loaning cars to Arkansas missionaries.

“I keep about 10 cars on hand for Arkansas missionaries to borrow while they are back in the state on furlough. All I ask is that they try to keep up with the scheduled oil changes on their own,” Patterson said.

Foreign missionaries on stateside assignments have a need for short-term transportation, said Patterson.

“He (Patterson) has a heart for

missionaries and wants to help them,” said Floyd. “He even pays for the (car) insurance.”

Patterson’s generosity doesn’t stop there, though, as he helped pay for Floyd’s daughter to attend college.

“He’s so generous, and we were thrilled when he helped us out with my daughter’s college tuition,” Floyd said.

“His generosity is far-reaching,” said Lynch. “When I worked for him

on his farm in the 60s, I didn’t have a car, but he let me drive his old 1940-something Ford pickup truck. He also did all my dental work for free. When it came time for me to go to college, he even offered to pay for me to go to veterinary school.”

In addition to being a philanthropist and dentist, Patterson is also a big practical joker, according to his staff.

“He’s always playing jokes on us,” said Terri Foster, dental assistant for Patterson Dentistry. “Just a few weeks ago he glued quarters to the steps of the office, trying to catch someone trying to pick them up.”

“We all love chocolate, and one time he bought us a container of chocolates, but he superglued the top onto the container,” Floyd said.

“We try to get him back when we can, but it’s hard because he’s still so sharp,” said Foster.

Contact Leah Fender at leah@arkansasbaptist.org.

First Person

Who should be called as an interim pastor?

Editor's Note: This is the first in a series of "first person" articles focusing on topics and issues impacting the church. Today, Don Moore, who served as executive director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention from 1982 until his retirement in 1996, discusses the topic, "Who should be called as an interim pastor?" Moore, 78, will start his 11th interim or intentional interim Aug. 11 at First Baptist Church, Dumas.

FEW OCCASIONS in the life of a church are filled with more potential for critical decisions than the period between the loss of a pastor and the calling of a new one. It is not uncommon for an all-out "tug-of-war" to develop during this period in the life of a church. Such an event is usually disastrous or – at the very least – regrettable. I believe a pulpit vacated by the resignation, retirement or termination of a pastor should not be filled by an interim pastor who could possibly become a candidate during the time he is serving as interim.

This should apply to ordained preachers, evangelists, missionaries, staff members and even inter-

im pastors who might aspire to the position of pastor in the church. If such people are available, who could be considered as candidates by the pastor search committee, they would need to be considered alongside other candidates. If they are given the opportunity to build a following preaching in the interim, other candidates are at great disadvantage because they would not have had the privilege of interacting with the congregation, as an interim would have had.

A sad scenario

The following scenario, or one very similar, is being lived out in many churches in Southern Baptist life. While it is more likely to happen with a staff person who is placed in the interim pastor position, it may happen with others who may be in the church, in the community or otherwise available and aspiring to a permanent church position. Their ready availability makes it a tempting option for a church and committee to "take the easy way out" and engage

them quickly as the supply preacher or interim.

A typical situation would be that a staff person of long and good tenure with a loyal following of significant church members is given the position of interim pastor. As opportunity is given for that person's gifts and skills to be demonstrated in the worship services, suggestions are made that this person might be a good candidate.

Supporters of the person enlist the support of others who are of the same persuasion that this person would be a good pastor. Key members of the pastor search committee are made aware of this sentiment. The entire pastor search committee gets word that this may be a growing sentiment within the church. The normal work being done in following up on others who have been recommended to the committee begins to be neglected as this pressure is felt. Pursuit of other candidates is put on hold because of this gnawing awareness

See **INTERIM** page 7



Moore

PERU

continued from page one

looked at the face in the photograph and told us where that person lived," Trevor said.

"That's just God moving," he said.

Divine appointments or "God sightings," as the Benton congregation calls them, abounded that day in Quirio as groups found one person, who knew another person, who knew another person in the photos and exactly where they lived.

Trevor visited a home where he and his IWC group were offered Coca-Cola, a prized offering after a long, hot day of hiking up the hill. Offerings of food in those places become more precious because some have little of it to give.

"I got tired hiking up those hills and sometimes I just wanted to sit down and rest or go back down," Trevor recalled, "but then I thought, if they are going to give us the very best of what they have, we need to give them our very best – our message about Jesus."

Highland Heights youth Olivia Suggs and Morgan Crowson met a woman so crippled by chronic pain that she couldn't walk down the hill to the community's center. She wanted to go to a church, Morgan recounted, but the church would need to come to her.

"I haven't thought about not having anyone to guide me in my faith," Morgan said, explaining that the woman was overcome with tears when they prayed for and with her.

Highland Heights member Dawn Bailey accompanied her daughter, Lauren, on the IWC project. Dawn said she felt a divine appointment when one of the people she was supposed to visit was a single mother like her.

"I saw her coming up the hill after work that day, awkwardly carrying the child, with her hands full of two bags, a purse and him," Dawn recalled. "We rushed to help her carry her bags up to her house."

Making personal connections with people made the day of hiking in the hot sun worth it, said Matthew McClintic of Highland Heights.

"By the fifth time of reading directions to people's homes that said, 'Go up to the top of the hill and take a right,' or, 'Go to the highest point at the end of the trail' where you couldn't go anywhere else unless you wanted to climb, I started to hit default mode, tired from climbing a hill," Matthew said. "Then I thought of Jesus, who carried a cross up a hill. And I thought, 'This is nothing. I can keep going.'"

Matthew continued to share with people throughout the week about the Bible studies that a group of 18 church planters from Iglesia Bautista Cristo El Fundamento, located in the

area, plans to start there, sparked by the week of community events led by IWC.

The students visited the community's two schools to paint walls and teach English. In addition, they removed boulders from a portion of a hillside so a trench could be dug for water pipes. At the end of the week, they held a family fun day, culminating in an evangelistic presentation and a showing of the movie "Courageous."

Enrique Caceres, pastor of El Fundamento, was a Peruvian church planter for 20 years before becoming pastor of the congregation two years ago.

"I have had the goal of going to the ends of the earth to share the gospel," he said. "We aren't here to put ourselves (the church) between four walls. We should be spreading out. ... This week is only the beginning."

Grecia Castro Rojas, one of the newly trained church planters, said, "It's an exciting prospect, working as a team."

This effort is part of an IMB church planting strategy for the Lima area called GROWTH (Growing Rapidly Only with Teaming Hands) or CRECER ("grow," in Spanish).

IMB missionary John Pham's goal is to pair each Peruvian church planting team with a U.S. church that will partner with and support the church planting efforts.

Churches interested in becoming a long-term partner with a Peruvian Baptist church planting team may contact Pham at phamilyof6@yahoo.com.

Kate Gregory is a writer/editor with the International Mission Board.

ABN Digest

Stories of interest to Arkansas Baptists

ERLC's Richard Land announces retirement

WASHINGTON (BP) – Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC), announced July 31 that he would retire, effective Oct. 23, 2013. Land's retirement is scheduled to take place 25 years from the date he assumed the ERLC's presidency in 1988. The trustee executive committee of the ERLC reprimanded Land in June for comments he made about the Trayvon Martin killing that ignited intense controversy – prompting the formation of a Trustee Ad Hoc Investigative Committee.

Thousands flock to support Chick-fil-A

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) – "Chick-fil-A Appreciation Day," as former Arkansas governor and Baptist pastor Mike Huckabee called it, attracted hundreds of thousands of people to restaurants across the United States, and may have been more successful than even he envisioned. More than 650,000 people signed up on Facebook to participate, and it seemed that each one came and brought a friend. The national debate over Chick-fil-A began when Baptist Press ran a North Carolina *Biblical Recorder* story in which Dan Cathy, son of the restaurant's founder, Truett Cathy, pledged the company's support of the traditional family.

Poll: Candidate's faith doesn't impact election

The religious faiths of President Barack Obama and Republican challenger Mitt Romney will have little weight in November's presidential election, a poll by the Pew Research Center shows, the Reuters news service reports. Sixty percent of voters are aware that Romney is a Mormon, and 81 percent say it does not matter to them, according to the poll. The awareness level is almost unchanged from four months ago, during the Republican primary elections. "Republicans and white evangelicals overwhelmingly back Romney irrespective of their views of his faith, and Democrats and seculars overwhelmingly oppose him regardless of their impression," the Pew report said.

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ABN online

Read a related story about what Arkansas Baptists are doing in Peru at www.arkansasbaptist.org

The Cooperative Program: God's mission standard

Every four years when the Olympic Games roll around, I am more amazed at the ability athletes throughout the world demonstrate, and the way God made their finely tuned bodies to perform at times superhuman feats.

Athletes competing in the games in London this summer are setting records and standards for excellence unheard of in past Olympics, prompting a

commentator to remark during TV coverage regarding the past glories of a gymnast who garnered a perfect "10" – "That performance

wouldn't cut it today. Today's gymnasts must do more."

While Southern Baptists were effective in missions prior to 1925, there is no arguing that the establishment of the Cooperative Program allowed the denomination to reach new heights in its worldwide reach – resulting in literally millions of lost souls around the world professing Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

I envision leaders of the Southern Baptist Convention discussing the performance of the denomination in fulfilling the Great Commission prior to the establishment of the Cooperative Program and saying something like, "We can do more!"

So at a time when other evangelical denominations held to their societal approach to funding missions, a plan was set in motion to

multiply the impact of Southern Baptists through a united giving plan.

In the years following, Southern Baptists would hit the stratosphere of propagation of the gospel through efforts supported through the Cooperative Program.

Simply stated, the Cooperative Program allows Southern Baptists everywhere to have a worldwide

reach through their giving – no matter how small or large their church.

When a church gives a portion of its receipts through

PRESSING ON

Tim Yarbrough

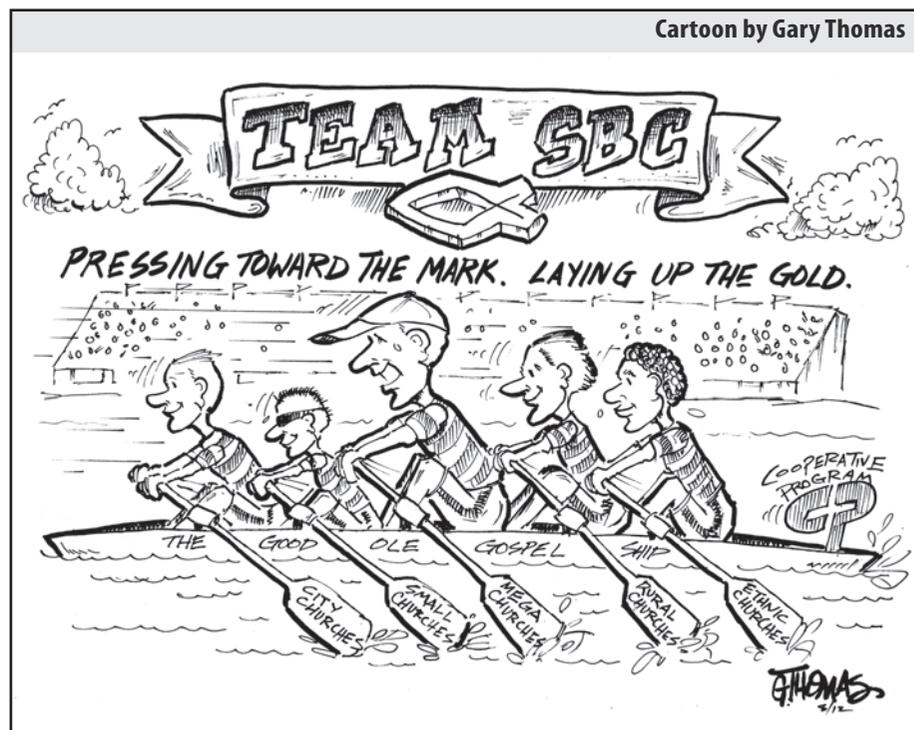


the Cooperative Program, its gospel reach expands exponentially across its community, Arkansas, nation and world.

It's like the gold – or perhaps more accurately stated – the "God standard of missions."

M.E. Dodd, considered the father of the Cooperative Program, perhaps said it best in a tract, "Why I Like the Baptist Cooperative Program." Dodd listed seven "special advantages" of the united giving plan that are still true today:

- It enables me to carry out my part of Christ's program of service.
- The Cooperative Program enables me to have a part in all that is being done.
- The Cooperative Program enables me to have some part in the whole work of Christ each and every week of the year.



- This Cooperative Program enables me to do all that needs to be done, because it includes every sort of service to every sort of somebody that any sort of anybody may wish to render (it is the only program in the world that is all-inclusive to every human need).

- This Cooperative Program enables me to carry out God's financial program for His kingdom.

- This Baptist Cooperative Program fixes the support of Christ's causes as a permanent principle in life and does not leave them to temporary emotional appeal.

- The Cooperative Program does not leave the causes of Christ to

become the victims of temporary weather conditions, depressions in business or other hindered causes.

The Cooperative Program has shaped for all eternity generations of Southern Baptists who have been called into service with the charge to carry the good news of Jesus Christ to their communities, state and country and throughout the entire world.

My prayer is for future generations of Southern Baptists to embrace and support the "God standard" established in the Cooperative Program.

Tim Yarbrough is editor of the Arkansas Baptist News.

Support, don't slander

Thank you for your editorial on cooperation in the July 12 *Arkansas Baptist News*. I agree with your thoughts on changes in the Southern Baptist Convention and the continued importance of the Cooperative Program as a source of unity.

Your statement that "we got all that business about the Bible settled" reminded me of how thankful I am to be an Arkansas Baptist. We didn't have to settle any business about the Bible. That is also true

of the International Mission Board (IMB) where I served for 30 years. There was no conservative resurgence in the Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC) or at the IMB.

The ABSC and the IMB were theologically conservative and worthy of the trust and support of Southern Baptist before the so-called "Conservative Resurgence" began.

Unfortunately, that did not keep leaders of this political movement from making dishonest claims of liberalism and heresy against our IMB missionaries and our state

convention leaders. I can remember mass mailings from northwest Arkansas attacking the veracity and the theology of our state convention.

At the same time trustees, including some from Arkansas, slandered our IMB missionaries with charges of liberalism and heresy. It is my prayer that in the future our leaders will have the courage to condemn slander and the use of labels against those who represent us on the mission fields of Arkansas and around the world.

Ron West
Booneville

Small churches need voice

Why drop the name "Southern Baptist" after 150-plus years? Nobody believes in slavery nowadays, and Catholics didn't change their name because of what happened in the Middle Ages, and they shouldn't. The trouble is the richest and biggest churches can send delegates, while most of us can't.

I think everybody ought to get a right in vote. That way the No. 2 church in the land could be ruled by all of us.

Nick Nixon
Charleston

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



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Baptists Ask

Why did God allow the shootings in Aurora, Colo., to occur?

Christians often ask about God's presence in the midst of suffering, and for good reason.

The Aurora shooting is but one of a long list of man-made and natural tragedies in this century alone. When disasters occur, even the most faithful believers grieve, become angry and question all they know.



Gore

While the question of suffering is as old as humanity itself, we hunger for answers. When answers are found, they are often incomplete and insufficient. Because our finite minds can never fully understand suffering, we must surrender to God and trust Him in every way.

When a crowd wondered about the Galileans' tragic deaths at the Temple (Luke 13:1-5), Jesus challenged their theology more than He answered their question. Because most of them believed that egregious sinners received horrendous deaths, Jesus corrected them. He taught that everyone equally stood as sinners before a holy God. Consequently, these Galileans were no more evil than anyone who died of "natural causes."

Jesus then focused His attention on their destiny. It was too late for those Galileans, but not for them. He wanted to prepare them for their own deaths, and He wanted them to be ready.

Life is brief and uncertain, and no one knows when death will occur. Because everyone dies, Jesus calls us to repentance. In the parable of the fig tree (Luke 13:6-9), He teaches that everyone must come to God's compassion and grace before it is too late.

Although we want to know why tragedy strikes, it is even more important to know that death is certain.

Jesus challenged the crowd to trust in the God who forgives sin and desires all to come to faith in Him.

When death comes to us, will we be ready?

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

'Can I go with You?'

"Can I go with You?" It was the most reasonable of requests. In fact, anyone with his experience would feel exactly the same way. Though he shattered the physical chains used to restrain him, his situation created chains that would torment and destroy his hope. Jesus freed him from the demons and healed him. Only Jesus gave him hope.

In Mark 5, we see a real life portrait of how powerfully Jesus changes a life. This man who was possessed by a legion of demons learned that "if any man is in Christ, he is a new creation" (2 Cor. 5:17). That is why he wanted to go with Jesus.

As a new believer, he had to learn the same lesson that everyone must learn. We are not only saved from the shackles of sin. We are saved to something more profound. We are saved to a personal role in God's

plan of redemption. Jesus told him to share his testimony of God's compassion and "what great things the Lord" did for him (Mark 5:19). Jesus turns the circumstances of our sinful life into a tool for evangelism. It is called a testimony.

We all must learn the same lesson. While most are glad to avoid hell, too many are not obedient to the greater truth of salvation. When you were saved, you were given a testimony. Jesus expects you – in your circle of personal influence – to share how God made you a new creation. Every testimony is precious because it was purchased by Jesus' blood. It is too valuable to be wasted. It is too powerful to be ignored.

"Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you" (Mark 5:19).

Greg Addison is president of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention and pastor of First Baptist Church, Cabot.



PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

Greg Addison

Perspectives on the 'Sinner's Prayer'

On the playground of Cooper Elementary School in Tulsa, Okla., in 1974, I recall clutching a foul-mouthed, redheaded bully in a headlock with my left arm while my right fist repeatedly pummeled his face.

"Say it!" I exclaimed. "Say the prayer!"

Through his tears and bloody lips, he begged, "You're hurting me – stop!"

I replied, "Hell is a lot worse! Say the prayer and God will have mercy on you!"

As he was finishing repeated the "Sinner's Prayer" (the same basic prayer I had prayed when I was saved), a teacher dragged me off him and hauled us both to the principal's office. I remember thinking, "Well, it was worth it; he got saved." In later years, I came to realize that the young man was most likely not making a profession of faith that day.

Lately, there has been a lot of talk about the "Sinner's Prayer." Is it good? Is it bad? Is it biblical? Is it superstitious?

There are many versions of the prayer, but most say something like this: "God in heaven, have mercy on me, a sinner. I now want to turn away from my sinful past and turn to you for forgiveness. I believe that your Son, Jesus Christ, died for my sins, that He was raised from the dead, is alive and hears my prayer. I invite Jesus to become my Savior and the Lord of my life from this day forward. Thank You for adopting me as Your child. In Jesus' name I pray, amen."

So, what could be wrong with this? Some say, "Absolutely nothing." Others say, "The whole idea of a 'Sinner's Prayer' is not biblical."

Among all the views and opinions, there are two primary opposing views:

The first view says to be saved all one must do is recite the "Sinner's Prayer."

If this were the case, the bully on the playground would have been saved that day. I seriously doubt he

was. Scripture is clear: "Confess with your mouth Jesus Christ is Lord, believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, and you will be saved" (Romans 10:9). It is not the prayer itself that saves us, but rather the conscious decision to repent; believe upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and His death burial and resurrection, and truly submit to the lordship of Jesus Christ.

However, many people have been drawn by the Holy Spirit to salvation and prayed a "Sinner's Prayer," truly repenting, confessing and believing upon the name of Jesus Christ – truly being born again.

The second view says the "Sinner's Prayer" is nothing more than a man-made liturgy, popularized by 20th century evangelists, and perpetuates a false gospel.

It is true – the "Sinner's Prayer" cannot be found in Scripture. Earliest records of such a prayer are only

500 years old. So, is it extrabiblical? Not really. A "Sinner's Prayer," like the one in this article, is built upon a biblical statement of repentance; belief in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and a pledge to fall under the leadership and lordship of Jesus Christ. This is a good thing. The trouble is that too many are prone to place their faith in a prayer, rather than placing their faith in Jesus Christ.

A "Sinner's Prayer" does not perpetuate a false gospel unless one is led to believe that there is something magical, mystical or inherently powerful about the prayer itself. The words spoken in such a prayer must be understood by the one praying, from the heart of the one praying and directed to God. The prayer itself does not bring about salvation.

May Southern Baptists always be a people of the Book and continue to faithfully proclaim the gospel and make disciples of all people groups, both here in Arkansas and around the world.

Eric W. Ramsey is an evangelist, author and cross-cultural communication strategist serving as president of TCWM, based in Mountainburg.



ANSWERING THE CALL

Eric Ramsey

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.



\$22 million budget proposed by ABSC

Tim Yarbrough
Arkansas Baptist News

LITTLE ROCK – The Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC) Executive Board approved a \$22 million Cooperative Program budget proposal for 2013, which is slightly higher than the \$21.4 million 2012 operating budget.

The 2013 budget recommendation will be voted on by messengers attending the ABSC Annual Meeting Oct. 30-31 at First Baptist Church, Cabot.

Meeting Aug. 2, the budget approved by the board reflects the first year of the ABSC's new budget formula approved by messengers at the 2011 annual meeting. The formula – which will be in effect for the 2013-17 budget years – increases the percentage of funds (total receipts) forwarded to the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), with budget surpluses being divided with the SBC. Additionally, the formula directs the convention to conduct a statewide emphasis every five years encouraging churches to increase their Cooperative Program percentage.

In February 2011, executive directors of state conventions agreed to affirm a portion of the Great Commission Resurgence report requesting a 50/50 division of Cooperative

Program funds – after consideration for “shared ministry” items. ABSC messengers approved at the 2011 annual meeting in Little Rock a recommendation by the ABSC Budget Formula Study Committee increasing the percentage which are given to the SBC Executive Committee for the next five years by the same two-tenths percent a year. 2012 will be the sixth consecutive year the ABSC has increased its percentage to SBC causes. In 2012, shared ministries total \$2.2 million, or 10.28 percent of the ABSC budget.

Emil Turner, ABSC executive director, said the 2013 budget proposal not only continues to increase the percentage of funds directed to the SBC – but it also allows Arkansas Baptists to assist smaller conventions.

“It (allows) us to help new work conventions in ministries that are diminished by budget cuts,” said Turner. “We are grateful for the faithful commitment to the Cooperative Program demonstrated by our churches.”

In other action, the board:

– Heard a testimony from new staff member Willie Jacobs, who is serving as urban church planter strategist for the ABSC missions ministries team. In his role, Jacobs focuses on urban areas and the Delta region, and in

church planting primarily among African-American churches. “I am excited what God is getting ready to do in Arkansas,” Jacobs told the board.

– Recognized the following outgoing board members: David Dillard of Sparkman, Paul Grant of Van Buren, Gene Tanner of Casa, Wade Totty of Rison, Paul Lancaster of Mountain View, Travis Berry of Arkadelphia, Larry White of Hardy, Gerald Kausler of Trumann, Dale Sykes of Mountain Home, Dolores Case of Fairfield Bay and Nora Earnest of Pottsville.

– Agreed with a recommendation of the Program Committee to approve 2013 goals for all ABSC teams.

– Approved the annual audit of the convention. Turner told the board the audit is “clean as a hound’s tooth. It is a good, unqualified audit.”

– Approved a recommendation from the ABSC administration reaffirming a policy of the board regarding the release of information regarding ABSC employee salaries. An ABSC Executive Board policy on the matter was approved in November 1983 and updated in August 2002. It states, “Salaries of Executive Board employees are to be made available, by the Executive Director, to any Arkansas Baptist upon request. The Executive Director is to exercise caution to see that the salaries of the Executive Board employees are neither writ-

ten, published or distributed.”

– Heard an update from Turner regarding the impact of the Affordable Care Act and its impact on the convention and providing health care for employees. “We have never purchased an insurance policy that has had as a benefit any abortion services. We have never done that and will not do that in the future. However, the insurance provider may have no choice about that,” said Turner. “At this point it is not impacting us, but it is a factor for the future of all of us.” Turner encouraged churches to contact Dan Jordan, team leader of the ABSC business affairs team, for more information how the new law potentially will affect their church. Jordan may be contacted at 501-376-4791, ext. 5171, or by email at djordan@absc.org.

– Approved the ABSC’s continued financial support of a leadership meeting in Southeast Asia conducted in cooperation with the International Mission Board. Turner said the ABSC has participated in the conference for the past three years, providing vacation Bible school for the children of missionaries. “It’s amazing. It’s the first time in a year that some of these children are around Anglo believers,” said Turner.

Contact Tim Yarbrough at tim@arkansasbaptist.org.

TURNER

continued from page one

Following the announcement, Turner stood with this wife, Mary, at the front of the meeting room. Members of the board stood and applauded. Don Blackmore, chairman of the ABSC Operating Committee and discipleship pastor at Central Baptist Church, Jonesboro, led the board in prayer for the Turners.

ABSC Executive Committee Bylaws call for the current executive director to serve until replaced, but Turner expressed during his announcement the “hope that the Operating Committee can find a replacement by the time of the December meeting” of the board.

“If not, I am prepared to serve until my replacement can be found and elected,” he added. “And in the event of such occurring by the December board meeting, I have requested that I be allowed to continue until the end of February 2013 that I may effectively orient my replacement.”

Turner has served as executive director since Jan. 15, 1996. He followed the retirement of longtime

state executive director and Arkansas Baptist Pastor Don Moore, who served from 1982 to 1996. Turner was serving as pastor of First Baptist Church, Lake Charles, La., when he was elected to lead Arkansas Baptists.



Emil Turner addresses the Arkansas Baptist State Convention Executive Committee.

Jason Noel, president of the ABSC Executive Board and pastor of East Side Baptist Church, Paragould, expressed gratitude for Turner’s friendship and leadership over the years.

“The thing I have loved about Dr. Turner so much is that, every time I am with him, he pours into me. The ministry that God has given to me, it matters to him,” said Noel.

“He is going to be greatly missed in the state of Arkansas,” Noel added. “When it comes to Southern Baptist life, I don’t know anybody on point and as well versed. What we really miss is that he is a friend of pastors. That is what he will be known for (and) remembered for.”

Building relationships among pastors and other church staff has been a focal point of Turner’s ministry in the state, Turner shared in an interview with the *Arkansas Baptist News* (ABN) as he marked his 15th anniversary in 2011. Turner, who has served on church staff and as

a pastor of churches in Kentucky, Louisiana and Mount Olive Baptist Church in Crossett, said he has a “deep admiration” for pastors and the difficulties and challenges they face.

During Turner’s tenure, the ABSC has grown from 1,378 congregations in 1996 to 1,545 churches and missions today – an increase of about 12 percent. Baptisms in Arkansas Baptist churches have averaged about 13,000 annually under Turner’s leadership. Giving through the Cooperative Program (CP) has increased from \$15.5 million to more than \$21 million.

In addition to presiding over the growth in churches, baptisms and CP giving during his tenure, Turner led Arkansas Baptists through the construction and completion of a new building to house convention ministries in Little Rock. The 45,000-square-foot facility was dedicated March 2, 2009, with funds provided from ABSC reserves, according to a report about the dedication published in the *ABN*. The building and property value was estimated at more than \$9.8 million at the time of the report.

Contact Tim Yarbrough at tim@arkansasbaptist.org.

ABSC Search Committee

ACCORDING TO BYLAWS of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC) Executive Board, the Search Committee for a new executive director is made up of members of the ABSC Operating Committee. Following is a list of current Operating Committee members:

Greg Addison, ABSC president and pastor of First Baptist Church, Cabot; Travis Berry, member of Second Baptist Church, Arkadelphia; Dolores Case, member of Fairfield Bay Baptist Church, Fairfield Bay; Gary Hollingsworth, pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church, Little Rock; Ron Kirkland, pastor of First Baptist Church, West Memphis; Tom McCone, minister

of music at First Baptist Church, Greenwood; Jason Noel, pastor of East Side Baptist Church, Paragould, and Executive Board president; Jamie Staley, pastor of First Baptist Church, Crossett, and Gary Thomas, pastor of First Baptist Church, Lowell. Don Blackmore, discipleship pastor of Central Baptist Church, Jonesboro, is chairman of the Operating Committee.

The committee requested that recommendations, resumes and other information concerning the election of a new executive director be emailed to Marty Davis at mdavis@absc.org for consideration, and not sent to individual committee members.

INTERIM

continued from page 3

that a segment of the church is really “pushing” to get their man “in.”

Resentment may be felt, as it seems they may have to recommend this person as a prospective pastor. For all practical purposes, the purpose for which the committee was elected has been taken over by unofficial forces unauthorized by the church. The committee may become divided as some individuals within the committee become sympathizers with the staff person’s supporters.

The sympathy of a single committee member can result in weakening the work of the pastor search committee. With the possibility of the committee being splintered by the pressure being exerted upon them, their efforts are diverted, their attention distracted and they may give up the process they adopted earlier when they were not under pressure. This could result in the committee not performing proper background checks and investigation to be performed in regards to another candidate.

If the committee does not choose to consider or recommend the interim, those loyal to that person will become defensive for that person, critical of the committee and will begin a campaign of criticism and even opposition greatly hindering the work of the committee. The general church membership will know or sense the unrest that exists and become uneasy.

All the while, the interim may come to enjoy the greater exposure, recognition,

affirmation and influence accorded a pastor compared to that usually given a staff person. At the same time, he has a platform for expanding his power base. Add to that the perceived tax advantage that is given to a pastor, and it is easy to see why a staff person could easily fall victim to his own selfish desires to be a pastor. Other candidates would not have been given such an opportunity.

If the pastor search committee withstands the pressure put upon them and brings a prospective pastor before the church for consideration, those loyal to the interim pastor being passed up will likely form a voting block to oppose the election of the recommended pastor. If the recommended pastor comes in spite of those who voted against him, the opposition would have a strong tendency to sow discord, create dissatisfaction and otherwise hinder the success of the pastor. The new pastor may be judged on the basis of how well or how poorly he may be doing compared to how the interim would be doing if he had been called.

There is considerable liability to a staff person being placed or placing himself in such a position. A staff person passed up by a pastor search committee is seldom able to stay on staff and give the new pastor his support. There may be tension existing between a want-to-be pastor and the one who is chosen as pastor, and this creates unbearable conditions for further ministry together.

Whom not to consider and why

The following is a suggested rationale for not considering an interim who may desire to be considered a candidate as the church’s permanent pastor:

- An interim pastor, if he is open to being considered a candidate, is privileged to build a support group that may lobby the pastor search committee and hinder their freedom to consider other prospective pastors.

- Supporters and detractors will tend to consolidate their influence and marshal support from their friends and fellow church members

for the person they desire. The result is that the purpose of a search committee will have been obstructed with the candidate being chosen by popular sentiment and political maneuvering rather than timely, prayerful, deliberate and rational consideration.

- Aspiration for greater power and influence will likely result in extraordinary efforts made to impress and to secure a good opinion while regular duties are neglected. A person with a full-time staff position cannot fulfill the work assigned to him and at the same time fulfill the role of an interim pastor.

- Great division comes to the Body of Christ when groups align themselves in support of a person who may not be the choice of the officially chosen pastor search committee. Resentment, resistance and retaliation may express itself in the life of the church, resulting in a major division within the church for years to come.

- Power struggles during the interim period will hinder the adjust-

ments that need to be made in preparation for receiving a new pastor. In fact, such struggles usually create a worse situation in the church than existed before the pastor left.

Avoiding pitfalls

The following is a list of some pitfalls churches should be careful to avoid:

- **Move slowly.** Churches tend to act with such haste, almost panic, when they realize they will be without a pastor. Little time is given to research and study how they should go about filling the pulpit and electing a pastor search committee. A more deliberate approach to these could help prevent this scenario.

- **Get help.** A number of resources are available to help churches and committees, including the associational missionary, convention consultants and publications written just for such a situation. Such assistance should always be sought.

- **Have a process.** If the bylaws of a church do not spell out the process a pastor search committee is to follow in searching for a pastor, the committee should - early on in their work - adopt a process in writing that would be agreeable to all of the committee that would preclude them from opening themselves up for problems. This should be done before any prospective candidates are contacted. Their agreement should include the issue of not using a possible candidate as an interim.

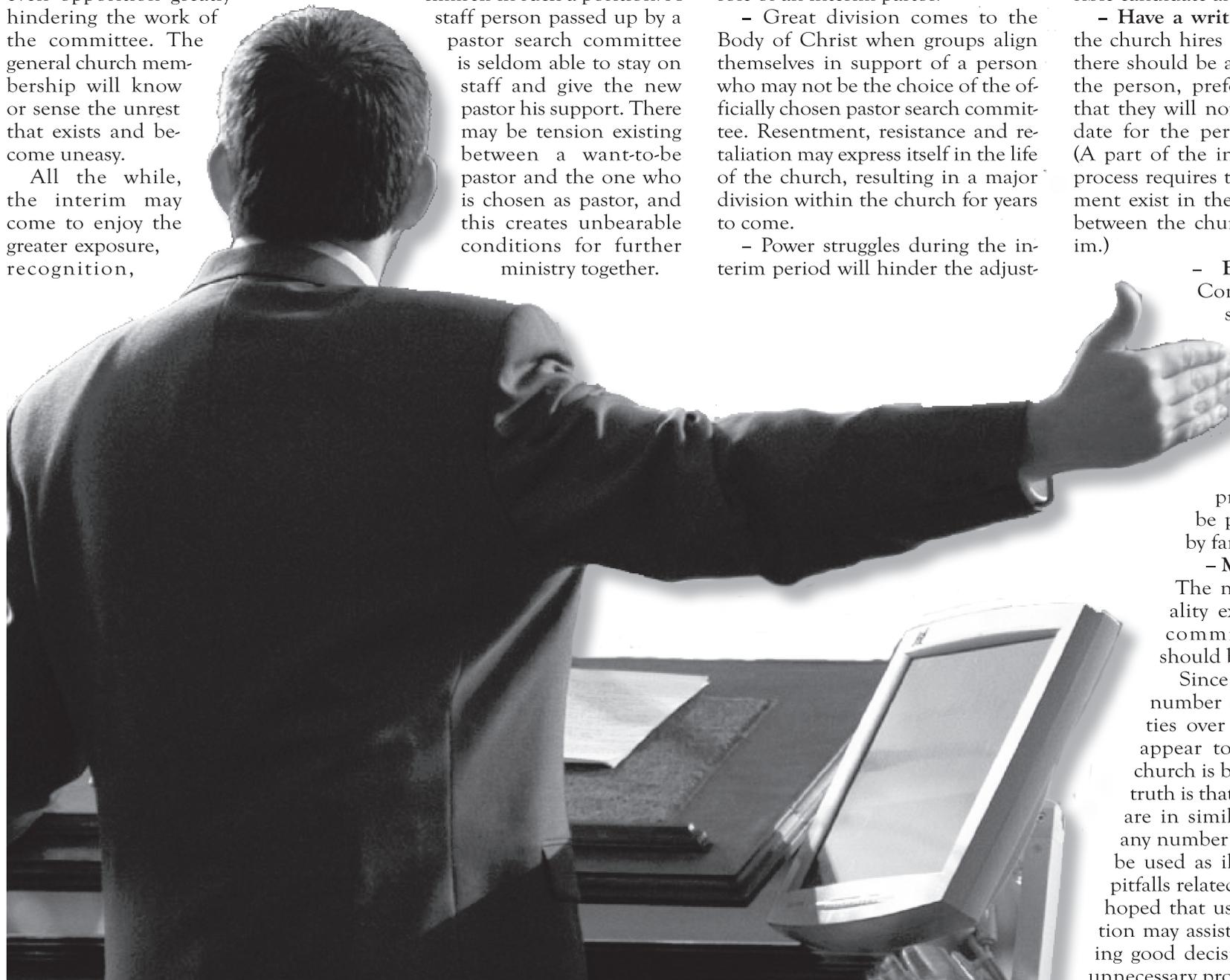
- **Have a written agreement.** If the church hires an interim pastor, there should be an agreement with the person, preferably in writing, that they will not become a candidate for the permanent position. (A part of the intentional interim process requires that such an agreement exist in the written covenant between the church and the interim.)

- **Be accountable.** Committee members should hold each other accountable for keeping true to their commitment. They should encourage each other to resist the pressures that may be placed upon them by family and friends.

- **Maintain integrity.** The normal confidentiality expected of search committee members should be honored.

Since I have served in a number of interim capacities over the years, it may appear to some that their church is being targeted. The truth is that so many churches are in similar situations that any number of churches could be used as illustrations of the pitfalls related to this issue. It is hoped that use of this information may assist churches in making good decisions and avoiding unnecessary problems.

A look at trends in decisions made in the absence of a pastor - decisions that can prove to be costly.





Ballard gives opening prayer in U.S. House

Stan Ballard (second from left), pastor at Nettleton Baptist Church in Jonesboro, gave the opening prayer July 18 in the U.S. House of Representatives. Each day the House opens with a prayer. Members of Congress can invite clergy from their home districts to give the opening prayer. U.S. Rep. Rick Crawford invited Ballard to make the opening prayer. Ballard is Crawford's family's pastor. From left: House Chaplain Patrick Conroy, Ballard, Speaker of the House John Boehner and Crawford.



Acts 1:8 One Day Mission Trip

Saturday, Oct. 6 Forrest City Area A Mississippi River Ministry Project 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Cost: \$10 (includes lunch, special dietary needs not provided) Deadline to register: Sept. 21

(Team assignments for registrations received after Sept. 21 will be made by coordinator and informed by email only)

For information, go to www.absc.org, or call Breck or Oleta, toll-free in state, 800-838-2272, or in Little Rock, 501-376-4791, ext. 5150. A ministry of the Cooperative Program and Dixie Jackson Arkansas Missions offering.

Ministry Opportunities include prayer walking, children's activities, senior adult ministry, home repairs/painting, health/dental clinics, youth sports camps, evangelistic teams, yard work teams, block parties.

Mail to: Acts 1:8 Trip, Missions Ministries Team, ABSC, 10 Remington Dr., Little Rock, AR 72204 by Sept. 21. (Copy & complete this form for each person attending.) Make check payable to ABSC or call 800-838-2272, ext. 5150, with credit card information.

Your name _____	Phone # _____
E-mail _____	Cell # _____
Mailing address _____	City _____
Zip _____	Church _____
Age if under 18 _____	
Team choices (must list 3 by name in case first choices are full):	
1st choice _____	2nd choice _____
3rd choice _____	
Special skills: _____	
Amount enclosed \$ _____	Questions? _____



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Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, one will lift up his companion. Ecc. 4:9-10

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What's the Cooperative Program?

The Cooperative Program (CP) is the plan Southern Baptists use to fund missions causes. The CP helps support international and North American missionaries, state convention mission work, Baptist organizations and more!

How does CP work?



Five reasons why the Cooperative Program is needed

Rusty Hart

Arkansas Baptist State Convention

AS THE NATION finds itself in the midst of continuing financial crisis, there has been a renewed call to good stewardship in the lives of individuals, churches and even denominations.

With fewer dollars to spend and fewer contributions to be made, people want to know that their money is making an impact and that they are giving wisely to make a difference in the world. So why should people utilize the Cooperative Program when they could give to other organizations or just distribute the money themselves? Is the Cooperative Program really necessary? There are several reasons why the Cooperative Program is not only needed, but continues to be an essential for Southern Baptists as they seek to reach the world for Jesus Christ.

(1) The Cooperative Program allows every individual Southern Baptist to fulfill the Great Commission. The Cooperative Program begins with individuals, obediently sacrificing to present their tithes and offerings to the Lord. A portion of every single dollar given in a Southern Baptist church goes to missions, helping every individual Southern Baptist play a vital role in fulfilling the Great Commission. Whether the dollar is from a large church in the city or a small church in the country, every Cooperative Program contribution counts. Every sacrifice makes a difference. Every dollar changes lives.

(2) The Cooperative Program is a reminder that the cause is greater than any one individual. There is a human tendency to think, "I can do this alone," or, "I can do this better than anyone else." As missionaries around the world see on

a daily basis, the task is far greater than any one individual or any one local church. With 70 percent of our world's population lost without Christ, the task is enormous. The beauty of the Cooperative Program is that it allows everyone to work together to accomplish what no one could do without the others.

(3) The Cooperative Program supports a comprehensive mission strategy. It is so fortunate that Southern Baptist forefathers looked at the big picture and set plans in motion that provide for the full spectrum of missions needs: educating and training, sending and supporting missionaries, providing resources for sharing the gospel and meeting needs and thus allowing everyone to celebrate the victories. Southern Baptists don't send missionaries without first training them. They don't send them without supporting them. Through the Cooperative

Program, they do missions comprehensively from beginning to end.

(4) The Cooperative Program provides for complete focus on missions. Having served overseas for eight years, I saw firsthand the focus that comes through the Cooperative Program. While most missionaries from other organizations were tied to telephones and computers to raise support to stay on the field, we were free to take the gospel to the people. We knew every day that Southern Baptists were standing with us and we didn't need to worry about provision for our family; we just needed to do everything in our power to see people come to Christ. We also found that there was a significant impact in telling nonbelievers that we were in Russia because of all Southern Baptists. What a beautiful picture our cooperation is to a lost

Students benefit from CP

Brett Cooper
Williams Baptist College

WALNUT RIDGE - The Cooperative Program (CP) provides a very real benefit for college students in Arkansas. Funds given through the CP to the Arkansas Baptist State Convention are directed to such ministries as Williams Baptist College (WBC) in Walnut Ridge, where they are used for scholarships.

"With higher education in America becoming more and more expensive, Cooperative Program gifts from Arkansas Baptists help keep costs low, making a Christian education accessible to

many more deserving students," said Tom Jones, Williams president.

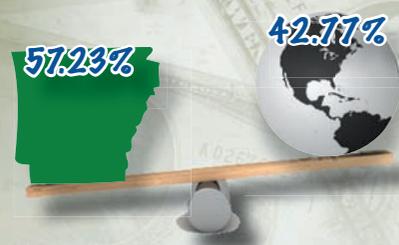
Jones noted that some 80 percent of Williams students come from Arkansas, so CP money affects students and their families close to home.

"WBC students not only know that they are attending a quality Christian institution, they and their families have the confidence that the college is supported and operated by a body of like-minded believers who will guard the biblical values that make us distinct as a Baptist college," he said.

See **STUDENTS** page 11

How are CP funds distributed?

National/International Missions		Arkansas Missions	
International Missions	21.47%	Arkansas Baptist Assembly	1.15%
N. American Missions	9.75%	Arkansas Baptist Children's Homes	2.64%
Theological Education	9.48%	Arkansas Baptist Foundation	1.55%
Christian Ethnics & Religious Liberty	0.70%	Arkansas Baptist Newspaper	1.32%
Facilitation Ministries	1.37%	Christian Education	19.46%
Total National/International	42.77%	Ouachita Baptist University Williams Baptist College	
		State Missions/Ministry Efforts	25.48%
		General Ministries	5.63%
		(Church Annuity Plan, etc.)	
		Total Arkansas:	57.23%



Note: Percentages were calculated based on 2011 fund distributions.

CP

continued from page 9

world as they realize that millions are giving so that they can hear the name of Jesus.

(5) **The Cooperative Program takes the gospel to places and people that most Southern Baptists will never see firsthand.** Most people will never be at the site of an earthquake or tsunami within hours

of tragedy, but through the Cooperative Program, they are there. Most people will never get to share the gospel with people in a remote land who have never heard the name of Jesus, but through the Cooperative Program, they are there.

While Christians are commanded in Scripture to share Jesus and help others, there will always be many places in the world that each person, as an individual, will never visit. Great mission-minded churches will make tremendous impacts on places

in the world, yet there are still other places where those churches will never get the opportunity to share. The Cooperative Program allows Southern Baptists to multiply their witness and themselves and takes them to those whom they will never meet but who desperately need the gospel.

Is the Cooperative Program needed? Is it really making a difference in the world? Absolutely. It is important for each Southern Baptist, and it is important for the many people

in the world who are lost! Through the Cooperative Program, there is a baptism every 1.25 seconds and 86 new churches are started every single day somewhere in the world. While that would be impossible for any individual Southern Baptist, they are truly learning that by working together nothing is impossible.

Together Southern Baptists are changing the world.

Rusty Hart is Cooperative Program specialist on the Arkansas Baptist State Convention executive support team.



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Thank you, CP!

An essential partner in Christian higher education

A Christian college education is made possible for many students when churches give to the Cooperative Program.

At Williams Baptist College, all Cooperative Program dollars received go toward scholarships. That means students benefit directly from CP support.

Those students prepare for their careers, and their lives, in a distinctly Christian environment. They encounter opportunities to minister close to home and around the world. And they chart the course of their adult lives with the guidance of a Christian world view.

Thank you, Cooperative Program, for all that you make possible at WBC!

WILLIAMS

Baptist College

Walnut Ridge, Arkansas
www.williamsbaptistcollege.com

CP supports work of Arkansas missionaries

Chuck and Vikki Franks Poland

Arkansas missionaries Chuck and Vicki Franks serve in Poland.

As part of their ministry to the Polish people, they recently sponsored a family camp where there were about 35 unbelievers, along with a few American leaders and some Pole believers.

During the week, the Franks shared the gospel repeatedly and ended the week with the baptism of two people who had come to know the Lord during the week.

The witness to those watching was incredibly strong. Robert, one of the men watching, stepped forward and immediately professed his belief in Jesus and asked to be baptized. Robert had suffered for years with terrible nightmares.

The morning after his baptism, he asked to give a word of testimony during a time when leaders were praying. He said, "As long as I can remember I have had terrible nightmares each and every night. But last night, for the first time in memory, I slept and rested without one single nightmare. Praise the Lord!"

Your giving through the Coopera-

tive Program is bringing freedom to people all over the world.



Chuck (center), Vikki and Ben Franks.

James and Martha Guenther Brazil

Easter 2012 will always be a special day for Arkansas missionaries James and Martha Guenther.

In September, the Guenthers began to plant a church in the city of Sao Pedro, Brazil.

At the time, a young lost couple, Jose and Edna, opened their home to the meetings so they could learn more about God.

On Easter Sunday, when the Guenthers arrived for their Bible

See **SUPPORT** page 13

STUDENTS

continued from page 10

The Williams president added that students' lives are impacted during their time on a Christian college campus, and the goal is that those students become graduates who make a difference in their world, whatever their major or career may be.

"Certainly, the academic knowledge and skills WBC students receive during their time at Williams will help them excel in their chosen professions. More often, however, it is that encouraging word or action from a Spirit-led student or faculty/staff member that sets them on a clear and determined path of service, both personally and professionally."

About 25 percent of Williams' resident students are involved with some type of ministry during the summer months, and Williams students are encouraged to take part in an array of ministry opportunities during the school year.

CP funds account for about 9 percent of Williams' annual budget, and they provide over half

of the academic and leadership scholarships awarded by the four-year liberal arts college.

"We take very seriously our responsibility to ensure that those funds are used to promote the purpose of Arkansas Baptists through the curriculum, employees and activities of the college," Jones said.

"As members of participating churches in the Cooperative Program, Arkansas Baptists can be confident that the offerings they give are used in a prudent and mission-focused manner."

Brett Cooper is vice president for college relations at Williams Baptist College.



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"The Cooperative Program allows us to help individuals and ministries become better stewards of their resources."

~ David Moore, ABF president

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CP supports needs of students, future ministers

Benjamin Hawkins
Southwestern Seminary

FORT WORTH, Texas - Through the Cooperative Program, Southern Baptists gave more than \$3 million to 206 graduates who received diplomas during the spring 2012 commencement at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary's Fort Worth campus. Each semester, the Cooperative Program provides much-needed financial aid for Southern Baptists who attend classes at the seminary, as well as its extension centers in Little Rock and around the world.

Of the \$186 million that Southern Baptists gave to the Cooperative Program from 2011 to 2012, 21.92 percent supported the convention's six seminaries. At Southwestern, the funds reduce tuition by 50 percent, and many students would be hard-pressed to attend seminary without this support. During a visit to Southwestern's campus in March, Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee President Frank Page told students that one of his primary concerns in promoting the Cooperative Program is "to raise money for Southwestern Seminary."

"I believe that we need students who can leave here (without) school

debt," Page said, "so that they can be serving in small churches and be on the mission field without having to pay back tens of thousands - if not hundreds of thousands - of dollars in school debt."

Quincy Jones, a Master of Divinity student at the seminary, expressed his gratitude for the Cooperative Program.

"It has been an absolute blessing to me and my family," Jones said, adding that the Cooperative Program does more than provide funds for seminary students. The program is about "working together to fulfill the Great Commission," and for this reason, Jones promotes the Cooperative Program wholeheartedly.

As the Cooperative Program student representative on campus, Jones educates students both one-on-one and by speaking in classes and chapel services. He provides students with resources to generate awareness of and appreciation for the program and encourages students to commit to the cooperative vision of the Southern Baptist Convention. In doing this, he supports the seminary's ongoing efforts to promote the Cooperative Program in various ways, including lectures and readings in Baptist heritage and spiritual formation classes.



The Cooperative Program provides much-needed financial aid for Southern Baptists who attend Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas.

"I feel very humbled to be a part of a convention of churches that believes in the Great Commission and is committed to it in such a way that it is giving, and that its cooperative giving goes toward theological education," Jones said.

By supporting theological edu-

cation, Southern Baptists invest in ministers who will spend their lives serving churches and proclaiming the gospel throughout the world.

Benjamin Hawkins is senior writer in the Office of Communications at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

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SUPPORT

continued from page 11

study, they began to speak privately with Edna about the gospel. As they shared with her, they began to realize that she had marked the very verses they were using, proving that she had been studying her Bible. It didn't take but a few minutes before Edna told them she was ready to invite Jesus into her heart.

What an Easter celebration! People began to gather for the Easter service, and they had the largest group to date at one of their Bible studies, 12 adults and several children. After the service, the Guenthers left to lead services in another village but promised to come back on Monday to speak with Jose, who had been working on Sunday.

When they arrived, Jose was ready to talk to them. In only a matter of minutes, Jose prayed to receive Christ as well.

There were many Easter celebrations around the world this year, but few can match the joy shared in the little house church in this Brazilian village, where Edna and Jose worshipped for the first time as children of the Risen Lamb.

Giving through the Cooperative Program makes it possible for mission-

aries like James and Martha to share the gospel literally all over the world.



James (far right) and Martha (second from left) Guenther.

Cliff and Cinthy Case Chile

Arkansas missionaries Cliff and Cinthy Case continue to share the gospel with the people of Chile.

Recently, as they visited the areas that were affected by the earthquake in February 2010, they had an opportunity to talk to a woman named Rosa. Rosa and her husband live and work a small parcel of land just outside of Itahue, Chile. Rosa's green thumb is evident as all around their house there are flowers in every corner.

The Cases asked her how she was doing and details about what had happened during and after the earthquake. She shared all they had been through. She told them of how they had just run out of the house before it collapsed. She spoke of how

students from the Baptist church came following the earthquake and brought them meals. When Rosa learned that Cliff and Cinthy also were Baptists, she began to point to the house behind her. "Each of you helped build this house. You helped build me a house. You all helped us when we didn't have anything.

"Thank you all for helping us," she said.

Indeed, Southern Baptists from around the world – as well as Baptists in Arkansas – helped provide meals and rebuild her house through their support of the Cooperative Program.



Cliff (far left) and Cinthy Case and sons.

Drew and Christina Smith Madagascar

Some of the newest international missionaries are from right here in Arkansas. Drew and Christina Smith, having completed their eight-week orientation process, are now doing an intensive three-week study

in Ghana, Africa, before heading to their new home in Madagascar.

The name of the country may be a household word in America thanks to the series of children's movies bearing the name, but Jesus is not a familiar name at all to many who live in the country.

Drew and Christina will be working with multiple unengaged, unreached people groups as they seek to use community development as a platform to share the gospel.

Having grown up in First Baptist Church, Hot Springs, Drew and Christina are now taking the name of Jesus to the ends of the earth. As we rejoice with them, we must also remember that many others are waiting to be appointed as missionaries because of insufficient funds.

Gifts by Arkansas Baptists given through the Cooperative Program make it possible for these God-called servants like Drew and Christina to further the kingdom of Christ.



Drew and Christina Smith.

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CP partnership helps train, equip students

Trennis Henderson
Ouachita Baptist University

ARKADELPHIA – Arkansas Baptists' faithful commitment to quality Christian higher education through the Cooperative Program is a significant investment for the benefit of Ouachita Baptist University.

Ouachita, in turn, faithfully uses those funds to invest in the lives of students. As a leading Christian liberal arts university, Ouachita's top priority is effectively serving and equipping students as they pursue a Ouachita education.

This past fall, enrollment on Ouachita's Arkadelphia campus totaled nearly 1,600 students, including 75 international students and missionary kids from more than 40 nations. This year's spring commencement honored 318 graduates who studied in Ouachita's seven academic schools: business, Christian studies, education, fine arts, humanities, natural sciences and social sciences.

Annual gifts through the Cooperative Program help provide needed resources for Ouachita to educate current and future generations of ministers, teachers, physicians, business leaders and others. Those generous contributions from individual Arkansas Baptists and

local congregations equal about 20 percent of the financial aid that the university awards to students each year.

Affirming Ouachita's role as "a Christ-centered learning community," the university's mission statement declares, "Embracing the liberal arts tradition, the university prepares individuals for ongoing intellectual and spiritual growth, lives of meaningful work and reasoned engagement with the world."

Arkansas Baptists play a key role in fulfilling that mission through ongoing Cooperative Program support. With thousands of Ouachita graduates serving throughout the state, nation and world, Arkansas Baptists' financial investment is multiplied through the influence and impact of each graduating class.

Expressing appreciation for Arkansas Baptists' ministry partnership, Ouachita President Rex Horne said, "As I begin my seventh year as president of Ouachita, it remains my privilege to partner with you through the Cooperative Program. I value the opportunity to work together to equip a new generation of difference-makers for the sake of God's kingdom."

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



Mission Service Corps

More than 30 people attended the annual Mission Service Corps (MSC) retreat held July 20-21 at Camp Paron. The retreat featured times of fellowship, speaking and sharing testimonies. Jeanine Thompson, MSC state coordinator, said the retreat is a way to say thank you to MSC missionaries for their service, as well as a time to learn about the different ministries in which MSC missionaries take part. Eight MSC missionaries were given certificates of appreciation from the North American Mission Board (NAMB) and the Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC) missions ministries team for their combined service of more than 68 years and were named emeritus MSC missionaries during a candlelight service. MSC is a part of NAMB and the ABSC.

Union Avenue, area churches partner for community event

WYNNE - Union Avenue Baptist Church, Wynne, is partnering with area churches to host a community Back to School Bash from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Aug. 11 on the Union Avenue Baptist campus. Other churches of various denominations and a church from outside Arkansas have joined in the efforts, including Three Trees Cowboy Church, Wynne, and Antioch Baptist Church, Wynne. Other local businesses are involved as well.

"Almost every day someone tells me that other churches want to get involved," said Henson.

Participating churches are bringing all sorts of things, from a cake walk and a putt-putt game, to a

fishing booth and horses for pony rides. One church from Tennessee even plans to bring a mission team, as well as popcorn, snow cone and funnel cake machines; games, and carnival rides.

Each church will be allowed to put up a sign and invite people to worship with them.

Along with providing children with free school supplies, Henson said they will have volunteers designated to distribute tracts and witness.

"Our idea was to let our community know that we are part of the community and know what is going on in our town," said Henson. "We also wanted to let our community know that we care about them and that the churches in our community are able to work together."

First Baptist Church, Madison, will hold a special service Oct. 14 to celebrate its 75th anniversary. The morning service will begin at 10 a.m., and Ray Dean Davis, associational missionary for Tri County Baptist Association, will share a message. The service will be followed by lunch and an afternoon of singing and comments from former pastors. All are welcome to attend, including former pastors and members.

Barcelona Road Baptist Church, Hot Springs Village, recently had a hearing loop installed by Arkansas Loops, a division of Saline Audiology. Hearing loop technology makes it possible for those who wear hearing aids to catch words and softer sounds that would otherwise be missed during worship services. Background noise and echoes cease to be a problem. Those with cochlear implants also benefit from the loop.

First Baptist Church, Barling, will host The Darts - a gospel-singing group - in concert at 6:30 p.m. Aug. 15. For more information, call the church at 479-452-2566.



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To submit church news, contact Jessica Vanderpool at 501-376-4791, ext. 5153.

ABC Homes seeks servant-minded people who are called to a ministry, not just a job.

Arkansas Baptist Children's Homes (ABC Homes) is seeking **houseparent couples** for the Baptist Home in Monticello; Boys Ranch in Harrison; and the Emergency Receiving Home in Judsonia. These

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full-time positions include salary, medical insurance, life insurance and paid leave. For information: Children's Home, contact Randy Luper 870.367.5358 or rluper@abchomes.org; Boys Ranch, contact Bill VonderMehden 870.741.5784 or bvondermehden@abchomes.org; Judsonia Emergency shelter, contact Sean Culpepper 501.455.8554 or sculpepper@abchomes.org.



FBC, Ward, anniversary

Church members Mary and Milburn Hill and Stephen Barger attend the 87th anniversary celebration of First Baptist Church, Ward, July 29. The event included a special worship service and potluck dinner, and former Pastor Bill Hilburn and former member Joel Moody, a retired minister, shared their memories of the church. Youth shared a song about looking toward the future while celebrating the church's past. Members were encouraged to dress in a style reminiscent of 1925.

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PASTOR

River Road Baptist Church in Redfield is seeking a **part-time pastor**. Resumes to P.O. Box 161, Redfield, AR 72132 or river013@centurytel.net. 501-397-2576 or 501-554-6220.

Vimy Ridge Immanuel is looking for a **bi-vocational pastor**. Send resume to 12214 Germania Road, Alexander, AR 72202.

Emmanuel BC in Blytheville is seeking a godly **pastor** to minister to our church and community. Send resumes to Emmanuel BC at 4315 No. City Road 535, Blytheville, AR 72315, ATTN: Pulpit Committee.

OTHER STAFF POSITIONS

Crystal Hill Baptist Church in Little Rock is seeking a **music/worship leader**. Contact the church office, 501-455-0669 or email at crystalhill-baptist@sbcglobal.net.

Walnut Valley Baptist Church is seeking a **pastor of student ministries**. Position is full-time with benefits. Send resume to WVBC, 1698 N. Hwy. 7, Hot Springs, AR 71909 or email to tforrest@cableynx.com.

Hickory Creek Baptist Church, located on beautiful Beaver Lake in Lowell is looking for a **part-time music minister** to lead our music program on Sunday mornings and evenings. This would be

a great opportunity for a music or ministry student to gain some great experience. If interested please contact our pastor, Steve McClain, at smccla@gmail.com or 479-841-0425.

Malvern Third Baptist Church is seeking a **part-time worship leader** for our blended worship service. Send resume to the church at 817 W. Young St., Malvern, AR 72104 or email to wt-strike@yahoo.com.

The New Site Baptist Church, Monett, Mo., is looking for a **full-time youth pastor**. Duties include junior high through senior high. Please send resume and references. P.O. Box 731, Monett, MO 65708 or to jhnewsite@mo-net.com.

Bi-vocational worship leader to lead us in worship with the praise team in blended music style. Email brodave58@yahoo.com or call 870-687-1590. Holly Springs Baptist Church website: hollyspringsbaptistchurch.net.

First Baptist Church, Trumann, seeks a **full-time associate pastor for youth and family**. Please send resume to P.O. Box 575, Trumann, AR 72472.

First Baptist Church of Paragould is seeking a **worship leader**. Additional duties, roles and responsibilities will be added in keeping with this person's gifts and calling. Submit resumes in confidence to First Baptist Church, Attn: Personnel Team, P.O. Box 816, Paragould, AR 72451 or fax to 870 236-8585.

Harlan Park Baptist Church in Conway is seeking a **bi-vocational minister of music**, pursuing a blended worship style. Send resume with references to the church at 1895 Dave Ward Drive, Conway, AR 72034 or email to garynmitchell@hotmail.com.

FBC, Muskogee, Okla., is accepting resumes for a **full-time education minister**. Send resumes and inquiries to apastor@fbc Muskogee.org or by mail to associate pastor, Mark R. Hall, 111 S. 7th St., Muskogee, OK 74401.

Calvary Baptist, Neosho, Mo., is seeking a **full-time student pastor**. Send resume to mail@calvaryofneosho.com. Attention: Student Pastor Recognition Team, by September 23, 2012.

The Mid-South Baptist Association is prayerfully seeking a **director of missions**. Send resume by October 15, 2012 to 6896 U.S. Hwy. 70, Bartlett, TN 38133 or email to domsearchteam@msbac.org. Mid-South Baptist Association is a regional association made up of over 160 ethnically diverse churches with a total membership of over 60,000 resident members from Tennessee, Mississippi, Arkansas and Kentucky. We are a fellowship of Southern Baptist churches committed to the Great Commission. In order to fulfill this mission, our operational emphases are: (1) Church Planting and Revitalization, (2) Church Leadership Development, (3) Church Mobilization and (4) Associational Resource Development. MSBA is an independent

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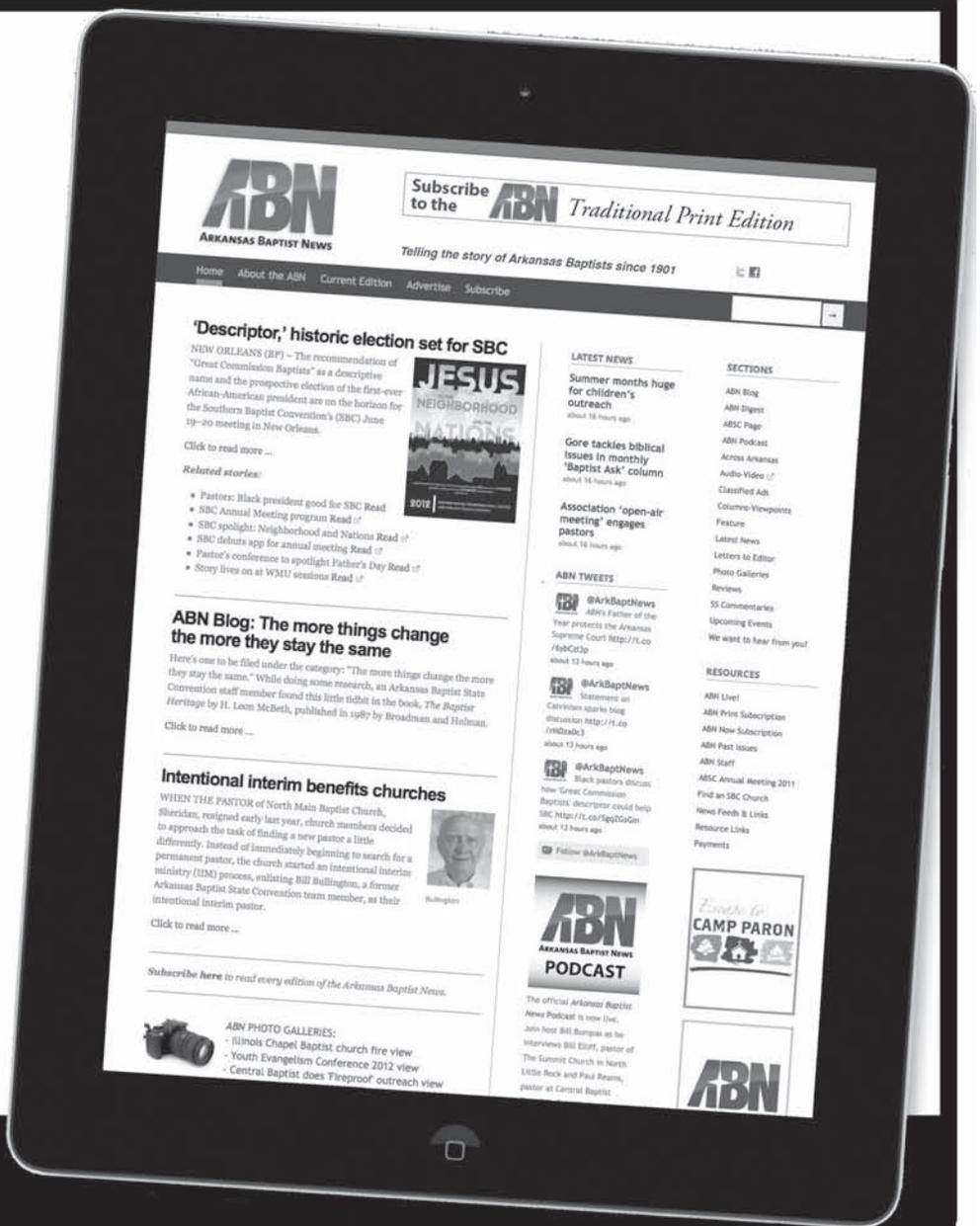
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Expressing love

After years of refusing to go to a marriage enrichment event, my wife convinced me to go. We left early so we could shop and go out to eat. A few hours later, I was in the emergency room experiencing excruciating abdominal pain. I had food poisoning. The medication I received fixed my problem, but it also knocked me completely out. When I woke up, my wife said through heart-breaking sobs, "If you didn't want to go, you should have just said so." We left the hospital and were able to make the next two days of the event. I learned a valuable lesson in the emergency room and during the

marriage enrichment event: Saying, "I love you," alone was not a sufficient expression of my love.

Ruth 1-2 contains the beautiful story of Naomi and Ruth, a mother-in-law and daughter-in-law who both lost their husbands. Naomi, a foreigner in Ruth's homeland, wants to return to her own country. Naomi tries to get Ruth, still young and marriageable, to go back to Ruth's own country. Ruth refuses by displaying an unusual love and devotion to her mother-in-law by going with her and providing for her well-being.

Ruth's love is expressed as commitment to family. Ruth told Naomi

that she would live wherever Naomi would live (Ruth 1:16a). Ruth had no legal obligations to Naomi, but she was committed to Naomi as her family. Ruth also expressed her love as a confession of faith. Ruth chose Naomi's God as her God (Ruth 1:16b). Ruth would marry Boaz, give birth to Obed, who became the father of Jesse, whose son was King David (4:17). Ruth became

part of the lineage of the Messiah (Luke 3:31-32). Going from Moab to Bethlehem, Naomi and Ruth would face an uncertain future. However, Ruth makes a lifelong commitment (Ruth 1:17).

We can express our love by being committed to our families. Our love for the Lord needs to be manifested visibly in our lives and needs to be strong enough to face the uncertainties of the future.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE AUGUST 19, 2012

Gerald W. Nash Jr.
chaplain
Second Baptist, Conway

Scripture passages:
Ruth 1:11-13a, 15-18; 2:2-3, 11-12

I have never been beaten, thrown in prison, ridiculed or insulted because I proclaimed the Word of God. However, Jeremiah suffered beatings, imprisonment, mimicry, name-calling and criticism. He heard people whispering slander and lies about him. He observed people scheming to get him in trouble - all because he was God's prophet.

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE AUGUST 19, 2012

Candace K. Hardin
chaplain
Baptist Health, North Little Rock

Scripture passage:
Jeremiah 20:1-13

Jeremiah was rejected because he sounded the judgment-is-coming alarm. He knew the people could not continue to live like they were and get away with it before Almighty God. The Hebrew people had forsaken God and had incorporated foreign gods into their worship. They even burned their sons as offerings of worship to Baal (Jer. 19:4-5).

Rise above discouragement

God told Jeremiah to tell the people to "turn from your evil ways, each one of you, and reform your ways and actions" (Jer. 18:11, NIV 1984). Yet the people despised and rejected Jeremiah for speaking of their sin and impending destruction. For all his work, Jeremiah experienced beating instead of blessing, rejection instead of reception and taunts instead of thanks.

It's enough to discourage anybody. In addition to undergoing rejection from God's people, Jeremiah also felt God had deceived him (Jer. 20:7). Some of us might take offense at such candor toward God, but any

authentic relationship must be based on deep, direct, self-revealing communication - including a relationship with our Almighty God. After all, it is God who invites us to "reason" with him in Isaiah 1:18: "Come now, let us reason together."

Jeremiah was honest with God and true to himself while holding on to his faith. To rise above discouragement, he didn't deny his feelings; neither did he deny his faith. Jeremiah trumped his feelings of discouragement with his confession of faith as he declared, "The Lord is with me ... for to you I have committed my cause" (Jer. 20:11, 12, NIV 1984).

Embracing responsibilities

When I was young, my mother saved trading stamps. She received a strip of green stamps along with her receipt. She placed them in little books to be exchanged for things needed around the house, like a toaster. My mother would give each of us children some stamps to save so we could trade them for toys. The longer we saved, the bigger the toy we could get.

It was very hard to fight the temptation to trade my stamps on some small toy, but I was saving for a transistor radio. When my mother took me to the redemption center, the clerk looked at my stack of books and asked, "Young man, would you

like to redeem those stamps?"

I told him, "No, I want to trade them for a transistor radio."

He and my mom laughed. I didn't understand what redemption meant.

The Book of Ruth is a beautiful example of redemption. God providentially brings Ruth to the field of Boaz, who is Naomi's kinsman. As the story unfolds, Boaz begins to love, protect and provide for her. However, he doesn't initiate any steps toward marriage. Ruth follows the accepted customs and requests Boaz to exercise his right as kinsman-redeemer. Boaz reveals to Ruth that he is much older than

she is and that he is not the nearest kinsman (Ruth 3:10-13). Although Boaz has no legal obligation to Ruth, he takes up the responsibility to make sure Ruth is cared for (Ruth 3:13). Boaz acts as a redeemer by buying back the land of Naomi and marrying Ruth. He fathers Obed, who will be the grandfather of King David.

"Redemption" was a word that meant "to acquire from the market."

When used in reference to Christ and salvation, the word takes on a very important theological meaning.

What Boaz did for Ruth, Christ did for us on the cross. Jesus redeemed or purchased our pardon from the penalty of sin (Rom. 3:23-24). Redemption in Christ is free, but you must exercise spiritual responsibility to receive it (Rom. 10:13). You

don't have to save, and you don't have to wait.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE AUGUST 26, 2012

Gerald W. Nash Jr.
chaplain
Second Baptist, Conway

Scripture passages:
Ruth 3:10-13a; 4:1-4a, 9-10, 13, 17

As a young man, he was fired because his boss thought he lacked creativity. He then formed an animation company, but his distributor went out of business, causing him to lose everything. He spent his last dollars to get to Hollywood, where he developed cartoon characters. He was told his Mickey Mouse character would fail because it could "terrify women." Soon his movies became hits worldwide. We

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE AUGUST 26, 2012

Candace K. Hardin
chaplain
Baptist Health, North Little Rock

Scripture passages:
Jeremiah 37:11-17; 38:4-6, 14-18

know this persevering man as Walt Disney.

Perseverance is absolutely necessary in our daily walk - from making a living to trusting God. Some believe obeying God always results in instant rewards. But Jeremiah's life illustrates a good, but very different, outcome.

Because Jeremiah faithfully proclaimed God's Word of warning to the religious leaders and the He-

brew people, the paranoid military guard of Jerusalem accused him of siding with the enemy (Jer. 37:13), then arrested him, beat him and threw him into prison (Jer. 37:14-16). The city officials called for his death (Jer. 38:4) and dropped him into an empty well where he "sank down into the mud" (Jer. 38:6, NIV 1984) and was expected to die of starvation. Eventually, King Zedekiah freed Jeremiah and secretly sought and followed his counsel about the judgment of God.

Through all of this, Jeremiah persevered in obedience toward God because he loved God's people and loved God even more. While up to

his chin in mud, he may have prayed his beloved Shema from Deuteronomy 6:4-5 (NIV 1984): "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord our God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength."

Paul may have identified with the suffering perseverance of Jeremiah when the apostle declared: "I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings" (Phil. 3:10, NIV 1984). Like Jeremiah and Paul, the greatest reward for persevering in obedience is the opportunity to know, love and fellowship with the Lord our God.

Persevere in obedience

Damage to Arkana church estimated at \$15,000

MOUNTAIN HOME - Arkana Baptist Church, Mountain Home, was found vandalized July 25.

Racist graffiti was spray-painted on the walls, and fire extinguishers were sprayed into the heating and cooling vents.

As a result, a fine white powder covers most of the church because the fire extinguishers were discharged into the building's ducts, said Manuel Macks, pastor.

"When I first saw it, it looked like a flour storm blew through the entire place," said Macks. "Everything was covered in a fine white powder."

Macks estimated it would take at least another week to get the white powder off everything.

In addition, vandals spray-painted the words "highway to hell," "delvil (sic) was here" and "white power join the KKK today," according to the *Baxter Bulletin*.

Vandals knocked over several tables and chairs, stabbed holes in walls and ceilings with butcher knives taken from the kitchen and scattered paperwork and other

items throughout the church as they moved from room to room.

"There's not a room that wasn't affected," Macks said.

The church canceled Wednesday night services but conducted Sunday services in the fellowship hall.

"We are thankful that we were still able to have Sunday services in our facilities," said Macks. "We had to change some things, such as using a keyboard instead of a piano, but we are so thankful that we were able to hold services."

Damage to the church was estimated at \$15,000, according to a press release from the Baxter County Sheriff's Office.

"I'm not sure where the sheriff's office got that estimate, but I'm sure it will take at least that much to get everything cleaned up," Macks said.

On April 20, another Arkansas Baptist church - Illinois Chapel Baptist Church in Prairie Grove - was destroyed by arson (see article in the May 3, 2012 edition of the *Arkansas Baptist News*).



Shown above are photos taken by the Baxter County Sheriff's Office of the damage done to Arkana Baptist Church, Mountain Home.

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Richardson named Beeson 2012 distinguished alumnus

NORTH LITTLE ROCK - Wyman Richardson, pastor of Central Baptist Church, North Little Rock, received a distinguished alumni award from Beeson Divinity School July 24.

"I was truly surprised and humbled to receive this award," Richardson said. "While I certainly don't feel worthy of it, it has made me want to aspire to live up to it. I loved my time at Beeson and will treasure this honor always."

"Wyman Richardson has distinguished himself as an excellent minister of the gospel. He has been a faithful servant and witness in his own Jerusalem - in Dawson, Ga., for nine years, and now in North Little Rock - as well as edifying the body of Christ beyond his own community through his writing ministry, both in print publications and blogging," said Thomas Fuller, direc-

tor of ministry leadership development, placement and assessment at Beeson Divinity School. "Wyman is one of those rare individuals who embraces the tension of serving Christ fully in present time and local space while engaging the rich reality of Christ's work across the centuries and around the world. We are proud to claim him as one of our own, and we celebrate what our Lord has and will accomplish through Wyman Richardson."

Richardson earned the Doctor of Ministry degree from Beeson Divinity School in 2004. Prior to Central Baptist, Richardson served churches in Georgia and Oklahoma. He is author of "On Earth As it is in Heaven" and "Walking Together: a Congregational Reflection on Biblical Church Discipline."

Richardson and his wife, Roni, have one daughter, Hanna.



Richardson



Charitable Giving TIP

BEQUEST GIFTS

The Chronicle of Philanthropy reported recently (June 28, 2012) an 8.8% increase in bequest gifts in 2011. That is great news as many individuals chose to help charitable efforts through their estate plans and to leave personal legacies for causes that they cared for while living.

Bequests gifts are a tremendous way to benefit ministry at one's passing through a Will or revocable trust. Christians have the opportunity and privilege to make a real impact for the Kingdom through these types of gifts. For more information on leaving a bequest gift through your estate plan, please call the Arkansas Baptist Foundation at (800) 798-0969 or (501) 376-0732.

Andrews wants to reach Muslims in Jonesboro

Bill Bumpas
Arkansas Baptist News

JONESBORO – Jamar Andrews has a burden to reach Muslims for Christ. But where he wants to do it might come as a surprise: Jonesboro.

Born and raised in the city in northeast Arkansas, Andrews attended Arkansas State University (ASU) and was saved in 2006 as a junior at Central Baptist Church in Jonesboro. Soon afterward, he got involved in a small group Bible study at Central Baptist, which ultimately led to his involvement in mission trips overseas.

It was on his first trip to West Africa that Andrews developed a heartfelt compassion for Muslims.

“I just remember being there and learning the culture, learning a little bit of the language at that time,” Andrews said, “and the Lord really developing a burden and a passion to share the gospel, but also with those that are coming from an Islamic background.”

He was married in 2007, and in 2009 Andrews and his wife, Stephanie, moved to Fort Worth, Texas, to go through the Islamic Studies program at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

“That’s where we are now,” said Andrews, “having an opportunity to reach out and to study the cultural aspect, as well as the religious aspect, and the mindset of Muslims so that we can be better equipped to share the gospel message because we do believe that ‘the gospel is the power unto Salvation’ (Romans 1:16).”

After arriving in Texas, Andrews and his wife thought they would finish their studies and then be appointed to the Middle East. But they felt God developing a strong burden in their hearts for the church in North America.

“But more so with the task of ed-

ucating and sharing about those that are coming from an Islamic background – not to fear them, not to be afraid – that the gospel is what they need most in their lives and at this pivotal point whenever they come to (America) or wherever they are in the United States to engage them and to be able to share with them,” explained Andrews.



Andrews

Andrews began to realize that with students coming from all over the world to study at ASU there was a golden opportunity to reach Muslims in his hometown.

“The mosque is located on the north side of town in Jonesboro, and that’s the side of town that I actually spent the majority of my life on,”

Andrews said. “So there is a growing population there – a lot of students coming in from Middle Eastern countries and contexts to study there at Arkansas State University – and it’s a growing thing because of the different kinds of programs that (ASU) offers.

“So even to this day, whenever I return home to visit, as I’m driving down the street, I see students that are in Middle Eastern dress, as well as students that are walking back and forth from the mosque, and have opportunity to dialogue,

and you wouldn’t think that would happen in the buckle of the Bible Belt but the Lord is bringing those that are in nations that are difficult to get into – He’s bringing them right to our front doorstep.”

And as the Andrews’ finish up their time in Texas, he says the excitement is building as they plan to head back home to reach the Muslim community for Christ in Jonesboro.

Bill Bumpas is a freelance production engineer, news reporter and host of the new Arkansas Baptist News Podcast. Listen to a podcast with Jamar Andrews at www.arkansasbaptist.org/podcast.



Listen to an interview between Bill Bumpas and Jamar Andrews at www.arkansasbaptist.org/podcast.

Black new Clear Creek AM

OZARK – Marty Black, pastor of Bonita Road Baptist Church in Bastrop, La., since 2005, has been named associational missionary of Clear Creek Baptist Association, effective Aug. 13.

Black has been pastoring and serving churches in northeast and north central Louisiana for 15 years. He and his wife, Tessa, have

been married for 28 years and have two adult sons, Jarod and Aaron.

Black has a bachelor’s degree from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and a master’s degree in religion from Liberty University.



Black

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Volume 111 Number 16 August 9, 2012



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PAGE 2

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PAGE 9



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PAGE 1

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