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- Flu impacts Arkansas churches
- ABC Homes forms pres. search committee
- Building gift sparks Ky. church growth
- Christian Education Section
- ABF distributes \$120K in surplus funds

Mission leader to resign

David Platt announces his intention to resign IMB presidency

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February 22, 2018



25 years later: 'Weaker brother' honors servants

Caleb Yarbrough
Arkansas Baptist News

MORRILTON - Even those who have a personal relationship with Jesus often struggle to live in a fashion that points people to the gospel. Yet, when God works in our lives, He can do the impossible.

Feb. 11 marked the 25th anniversary of one family's faithful obedience, which led to the transformation of one man's life and impacted generations to come.

In February 1993, Chuck Miller was living in Harrisburg, a small town about 20 miles outside of Jonesboro. While he was saved at 10 years old, Miller had struggled with drug use in his younger years and began using marijuana once again while working for the city.

"I was working a public job trying to hide a private sin," said Miller. "In January 1993 I was arrested on drug charges."

Ever since he was a little boy, Miller said he has been

an emotional person in spite of his imposing stature; today he stands 6'5" and weighs around 240 pounds.

Being arrested and having his private sin brought into the open was difficult for Miller. At the time, he said, he became so overcome by emotions that he wanted to take his own life.

Bill Scroggs, a family friend of Miller, heard about Miller's arrest a few days after it happened and began to call him daily.

"He would tell me he

loved me and that God loved me and just check on me," said Miller. "He would do that every day and sometimes multiple times a day."

On the 11th day after Miller's arrest, he said he had a feeling of "demonic activity around him" and believed that if he did not leave Harrisburg, he was going to die. He reached out to Scroggs, who invited Miller to come visit him and his family in Batesville, where the Scroggs family had moved a few months earlier.

Miller, his wife, Loretta, and his three children, took Scroggs up on his offer. At the end of the weekend Miller's family returned to Harrisburg, but Miller stayed – for four months.

Miller and his wife spoke every night, and he and his family were together each weekend. The separation was not a marital one but simply the fallout of Miller feeling God call him out of Harrisburg.

See **HELP** page 6

ABN classifieds get results!

Read them on Page 12.

The ABN classifieds are a great way to advertise for your church, ministry or business.

You can now submit a classified ad via the ABN website at

arkansasbaptist.org/ads

Classifieds

PASTOR:

partial or bi-vocational or
partial: small church or musician with a full-time position in town. Email: karp@earthlink.net
 to Salomone Baptist Church, Box 100, WI 72900.

"Small church (BRC) seeking full-time pastor. Resumes may be sent to: Memorial Baptist Church, 400 Fourth St. West, Little Rock, AR 72201. Pastor Search Committee: 501-225-1111. Website: www.mbrch.org. E-Mail: info@mbch.org. DHRG, 7815 S. Wagon, Kansas, email: whit@whitdhr.org or whitdhr.org.

"Spreading Baptist Church, Rm 100, seeking a **full-time pastor** to minister including referrals. Baptist Church, Pastor Search 2515 N. 30th Street, Fort Smith, AR 72504.

Senior Grades Baptist Church
 Pile to seeking a **full-time** past minister to Cedar Grapes Baptist Church Search Committee, 301 N. Road, Abington Park, AR 71556

First Baptist of Independence
full-time or bi-vocational
 Pastor would minister to ABC, 601 S. Main, AR 72427.

First Baptist Church of
 is **bi-vocational or full-time**

OTHER STAFF POSITION

Editorial assistant - The St. Raphael News is seeking a full-time assistant to fill the position of editorial assistant in the St. Raphael News. Send resume to: St. Raphael News, 1000 St. Raphael Ave., St. Raphael, WI 53080.

flexible hours. Good communication essential. Duties include - but not limited to - light editing, proofreading, and layout work. Interview

first **Free Baptist Church**, located at 1000 10th St. NW, is seeking a **full-time pastor** and a **full-time worship leader**. They are seeking individuals who are self-motivated, have a B.S. in divinity or theology, and are 30-40 years old. For more information, contact the church at 202/638-1100.

Free Baptist Church, located at 1000 10th St. NW, is seeking a **full-time pastor** and a **full-time worship leader**. They are seeking individuals who are self-motivated, have a B.S. in divinity or theology, and are 30-40 years old. For more information, contact the church at 202/638-1100.

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Life Church and Planet
2507 Pine Ave., North Little Rock
brant@lifevillage.org
East River Church, Inc.

Part-time military director
We seek an experienced military director to coordinate and manage all military affairs of the company. The position involves working with the military on all matters relating to the company's operations. The successful candidate will be responsible for developing and implementing military policies and procedures, and for ensuring that the company's military affairs are in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations. The position is a full-time position with a competitive salary and benefits package. For consideration, please send your resume and cover letter to: [Redacted], [Redacted], [Redacted].

of Abuse Search Committee, c/o Baptist Church West, P.O. Box 1, Can, OK 73534 or email to cc@abuse.org.

Plantist needed at Calvary Church in Seattle. Contact: Joyce 581-4538-5555.

First Baptist Church of Huntington a full-time youth minister to First Baptist Church 352 Huntington Ave. 719th or 4th St. Huntington, WV 26031. 766-2000, offering@firstbaptist.org

MISCELLANEOUS

Refurbished church bus
Kauka-Bus Sales, Georgia Roadside - 6626.
For sale: 1994 Ford 350 B engine, adding 150,000. Great price. 1-650-865-6307 or 9391.

ABN
Antiques/Buyers/Repair

Submit your classified ad
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ABN Digest

Stories of interest
to Arkansas Baptists

CBF nixes 'absolute' ban on LGBT hiring practices

DECATUR, Ga. (BP) – The governing board of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF) has voted to lift the Fellowship's "absolute prohibition" of hiring homosexual and transgender employees.

But CBF "leadership positions in ministry" and missionary roles still will be limited to individuals "who practice a traditional Christian sexual ethic of celibacy in singleness or faithfulness in marriage between a woman and man," according to a hiring "implementation procedure" also adopted by the Governing Board. Other positions will be open to "Christians who identify as LGBT."

The new hiring policy and implementation procedure – adopted Feb. 9 at a CBF Governing Board meeting in Decatur, Ga. – replace the previous CBF hiring policy, which prohibited "the purposeful hiring of a staff person or the sending of a missionary who is a practicing homosexual."

The 16-member Governing Board's vote is binding and does not require approval by the annual CBF General Assembly.

The policy change was recommended by a seven-member Illumination Project Committee appointed in 2016 to chart a unified path forward for the CBF amid diverse views on human sexuality.

The CBF was founded in 1991 as a fellowship of churches that objected to the ideology and methods of the Southern Baptist Convention's Conservative Resurgence.

The full Illumination Project Committee report is available on the CBF website.

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

Ark. flu outbreak impacts churches and communities

WHAT WOULD IT take for an Arkansas Baptist church to change its warm, "Y'all come," greeting to its community to the cautious and unexpected, "Y'all stay home"? The answer is simple ... and serious: the 2017-18 flu epidemic.

Already, Arkansas has experienced approximately 150 flu fatalities in the 2017-18 flu season, and there are no signs of the flu loosening its deadly grip on the Natural State anytime soon.

The flu outbreak in Arkansas, the worst in nearly 20 years, has made its ferocious path through Arkansas Baptist churches as well, with many churches seeing decreased numbers of people attending services, which goes hand-in-hand with decreased offerings, even as churches take extra precautions, adjust schedules and offer words of comfort to those who have lost loved ones to the flu.

In Judsonia, a beloved elementary school teacher, age 42, recently died from flu complications. Carey Trickey, pastor of First Baptist Church, Judsonia, joined with other area pastors to counsel the school children grieving their loss.

Rocky Bayou Baptist Association rescheduled a youth rally, originally scheduled for mid-February, to mid-March due to the flu epidemic.

Throughout Arkansas, churches are reporting dramatic drops in church attendance, with First Baptist Church, Sheridan, offering one snapshot of these dwindling numbers. First Baptist, which typically has an average attendance of 185, has seen church attendance decrease by approximately 30 percent due to the flu outbreak.

Decreases in church attendance seem to mirror high rates of absences in local



Arkansas flu epidemic

Arkansas is experiencing one of the state's deadliest flu seasons in the past 17 years. As of press time, more than 140 people have died in the state from the illness.

schools. On one day in December, 159 children at a middle school in Star City were absent due to illness.

As the flu continues its rampage, church leaders, with daily interactions with church members and community residents, have also experienced the flu firsthand. Ricky Harrison, pastor of Fellowship Bible Baptist Church, Star City, endured the flu. Even as another minister brought a Sunday message in his absence to a congregation that numbered 28 on the cold, damp morning, the worship music was shortened because the pianist was also absent due to illness. Evening services were cancelled.

Church leaders should not be discouraged because of such dwindling numbers, believes James Watson, pastor of Greenlee Memorial Baptist Church in Pine Bluff. "In times like this, numbers don't really indicate the reality of a church," he said.

Beech Street First Baptist Church, Texarkana, already has had two of its staff mem-

bers become ill with the flu, which is "having an impact in this neck of the woods," according to pastor Craig Jenkins.

Families of ministers are not immune to the flu either. Pastor Danny Allen, who serves Rison Baptist Church, Rison, reported that two of his four children have had the flu.

With the flu epidemic in full swing, many Arkansas Baptist churches are taking extra precautions to protect their members and visitors. For example, some churches are forgoing the usual handshake greeting during Sunday services while others are placing additional hand sanitizer dispensers throughout their facilities. Still others are encouraging members and guests to stay home if they are experiencing any signs of illness, with "Y'all come," uncharacteristically becoming, "Y'all stay home,"... at least for now.

Reporting for this article was done by Jeanie Weber and Margaret Colson of the Arkansas Baptist News staff.

'Worst in almost two decades'

Flu facts:

- 140 Arkansans have died from flu-related causes so far in 2018 as compared to 110 people in 2014 and 2015.
- Of the 140 deaths, 99 have been people 65 or older; two people between the ages of five and 16 have also died.
- Flu shots can sometimes be ineffective in the elderly.
- For people of all ages, flu shots have shown to decrease risk of getting the flu, and for those who do get sick, making the flu milder.

**Compiled from KTHV-TV reports*

ABCHomes announces search for exec. director

LITTLE ROCK – The Arkansas Baptist Children's Homes and Family Ministries Board of Trustees has appointed a five-member search committee to seek a successor for retiring Executive Director David Perry.

The committee, chaired by Joe Statton, executive pastor of Geyer Springs First Baptist Church, represents a cross section of board members and will be respon-



Perry

sible for reviewing all resumes, interviewing qualified candidates and making a final recommendation to the Board of Trustees. Other committee members are four laypersons: Tommy Papasan, vice president, from First Baptist Church, Danville; Clara Cromer, Immanuel Baptist Church, Little Rock; Sharon Jones, Second Baptist Church, Arkadelphia, and Josh Bryant, First Baptist

Church, Rogers.

"God is leading us to find someone who has a specific calling to the compassionate ministry of working with children and families," said Statton, adding that candidates for the position must have an earned degree in a child-welfare field, "an impeccable character and exceptional leadership skills." The candidate should also demonstrate abilities in donor relations, written and verbal communication, fundraising and

public relations.

"The committee is asking Arkansas Baptists to pray for each of these committee members as they seek God's will in finding the next executive director and for the person God is simultaneously leading to join Arkansas Baptists in the work of the Children's Homes," said Statton.

Resumes, along with a cover letter and testimony of salvation and ministry call, should be emailed to execsearch@abchomes.org.

Platt to transition out of IMB, cites desire to return to pastorate

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) – David Platt has announced plans to transition out of his role as president of the International Mission Board (IMB) but will continue to serve until a new president is selected.

Platt told trustees, missionaries and staff Feb. 12 that during his nearly four-year tenure at the IMB, he has been “burdened to continue preaching and leading in the local church,” which led to assuming a teaching pastor role at McLean Bible Church in Northern Virginia, alongside his leadership of the IMB.

“I am more passionate today than I have ever been about getting the gospel to the nations, and I want to spend what little time I have left on this earth with urgency toward that end,” Platt said according to an IMB news release.

Platt added, “I have come to the realization that it is not viable long-term for me to lead as president of the IMB while serving as teaching pastor in a church. This realization has been sobering, for I don’t believe I can choose between preaching and leading in the local church, and mobilizing and shepherding people in global missions. Therefore, I have come to the conclusion that if I am going to serve in this way in the local church, then I need to serve in different ways for the cause of global missions.”

In 2017, Platt began serving as a teaching pastor at McLean. The IMB trustee executive committee agreed in August to evaluate Platt’s involvement at McLean during a provisional period, Baptist Press reported in September.

Platt “has no timeline for his departure,” according to a Q-and-A posted on the IMB website, “but he asked that the search” for a successor “begin immediately.”

Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) President Steve Gaines praised Platt’s IMB service.

“I have known and loved David Platt for many years,” Gaines, pastor of Memphis-area Bellevue Baptist Church in Cordova, Tenn., said in



David Platt (right, in yellow shirt), as president of the International Mission Board and earlier as a pastor, regularly has preached in overseas settings toward sharing the gospel with the nations. International Mission Board photo

written comments. “I am very grateful for the service he has provided as the leader of the IMB. His love for our Savior and passion for the spread of the gospel are both well known to all. He has served Southern Baptists well. We will continue to pray for him and his precious family as they faithfully serve our Lord in the days and years ahead.”

An IMB presidential search committee will comprise board trustees appointed by trustee chairman Rick Dunbar, according to the IMB release.

Dunbar, a member of First Baptist Church in Madison, Miss., said he is “thankful that David Platt will continue to lead until a new president is elected.”

“We are sad, but also feel confident in the future as we move forward,” Dunbar said in the IMB release. “We trust that David’s gifts of preaching, teaching and writing will continue to bless the work of the IMB for many years to come, and we look forward to a long-term relationship.”

In a statement, Platt said “trustee leaders have communicated a desire” for him “to serve with the IMB in the future in some capacity.” Platt in-

dedicated willingness to do that “if the Lord so leads.”

Among highlights of Platt’s IMB tenure were establishing new channels for professionals, students and retirees to enter the mission field and collecting a record \$165.8 million for the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions in 2015.

Under Platt’s leadership, IMB trustees adopted a balanced budget in 2016 following a six-year period in which the board’s expenses exceeded its revenue by some \$210 million.

Previously, the IMB had overcome the shortfall by using reserve funds to make up the difference – including global property sales – as it gradually reduced its missionary force. But beginning in 2015, IMB trustees and staff realized an “organizational reset” was necessary to put the board on stable footing for the future.

Consequently, voluntary resignation and retirement incentives were offered beginning in 2015, and 1,132 missionaries and stateside staff accepted, bringing the board’s total number of missionaries under 4,000 for the first time

since 1993, according to SBC Annual reports.

As of Dec. 31, 2017, the IMB reported 3,562 overseas missionaries.

“By God’s grace over recent years, we have come to a stable, healthy financial position, we have clarified our mission, and we have recalibrated our internal systems and structures around that mission,” Platt said. “We have sought to create collaborative processes in the IMB such that what we do doesn’t revolve around one leader, but around all of us working together. Consequently, our vision for the future remains the same: we will continue partnering with churches to empower limitless missionary teams who are evangelizing, discipling, planting and multiplying healthy churches, and training leaders among unreached peoples and places for the glory of God,” Platt said.

Author of the books “Radical” and “Follow Me,” Platt was pastor of The Church at Brook Hills in Birmingham, Ala., from 2006-14. He also founded and leads Radical, a ministry that provides resources to support discipling-making in local churches.

ABN Digest

Stories of interest
to Arkansas Baptists

Ark. among 21 states in well-being decline

WASHINGTON – Arkansas is among a record number of states – shattering a 2009 record – to see its “well-being” score decline by a statistically significant margin, a Gallup study reported Feb. 13.

Previously, 15 states reported lower well-being than the year before in the midst of the Great Recession of 2009.

“The large number of states with declines in well-being in 2017 is particularly notable, given that Americans’ confidence in the economy and perceptions of the job market are substantially better in 2017 than they were in 2009,” states a summary of the Gallup study.

States experiencing declines in 2017 are primarily located in the South and West, and are states that have been both historically high in well-being (such as Hawaii and Alaska) and low in well-being (such as Mississippi, Louisiana and Ohio), according to Gallup.

In addition to Arkansas, declining states were Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas, Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Nevada, Oregon, Washington, Maine, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Missouri and Ohio.

For the nation as a whole, the Well-Being Index score for the U.S. in 2017 was 61.5, a decline from 62.1 in 2016 and the largest year-over-year decline since the index began in 2008.

Gallup’s findings are from 160,000 interviews with U.S. adults in all 50 states throughout 2017, and are based on five “essential elements” of well-being: purpose, social, financial, community and physical.

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

Editorial & Opinion

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

1 Peter 3:15 (NIV)

How Platt leaving IMB impacts SBC missions

The "heavy lifting" of serving as a denominational leader has claimed one of Southern Baptists' rising young stars.

David Platt, president of the International Mission Board (IMB) since 2014, has announced that he intends to transition out of the role once the board finds a successor.

If there is anything Southern Baptists have consistently agreed on through the 173 years of existence, it is, of course, missions – particularly international missions.

But the task of calling out, training and deploying thousands of missionaries across the globe is serious business, and an expensive and exhaustive one at that.

According to everything we know about IMB's financial condition when Platt took office, a radical "organizational reset" of the agency was necessary – pardon the pun to Platt's popular book, "Radical."

Through a Voluntary Retirement Incentive (VRI), 1,132 missionaries and state-side staff were jettisoned from the entity starting in 2015 to make up budget deficits (necessary because most of the IMB budget goes to salaries, travel and other expenses for missionaries).

A refreshing initiative was Platt's launch of Limitless, a strategy to deploy thousands of Southern Baptists as modern-day "tentmakers" to work in their professions overseas. I seem to recall a number of years ago a similar "Limitless-style" businessperson's ini-

tiative promoted by Henry Blackaby, of the former Home Mission Board (now North American Mission Board) and the now-defunct Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission.

While Limitless is certainly a wonderful idea – that of mobilizing the laity to missions – I understand that almost

as soon as the strategy was announced, questions arose about how Limit-

less "missionaries" would be trained, who would supervise them, where they would be "deployed" and how they would impact key IMB strategies in areas of intense focus, such as with unreached people groups (UPGs).

In all honesty, questions of this sort always come when a legacy entity such as IMB, with a long history of missionary deployment, begins to embrace "radical" change – there's that word again.

Platt's election to lead arguably the largest and most expansive mission-sending organization the world has ever seen raised many eyebrows when announced.

Younger SBC pastors roundly applauded the move, seeing Platt as a breath of fresh air to a denominational structure that they see as tired, outdated and driven by history rather than new and innovative missiological thinking.

Career missionaries and others with more of a traditional missiology of world evangelism questioned whether Platt – having never served as a career missionary on the field – could lead the diverse

infrastructure and mind-numbing multi-faceted aspect of the entity charged with calling out and deploying missionaries to critical areas of the world.

The differences between Platt and his predecessors were obvious to outsiders.

Whereas past IMB presidents traveled the world exhaustively and spoke in as many churches as would have them on Sunday mornings, during revivals, at missions celebrations, and the such – championing the cause of Southern Baptist international missions – Platt did travel, but he had the desire to still connect to a pastorate each week back home.

Additionally, due to his age, Platt – rightfully so – did not want to travel so much that he would miss seeing his young children grow up.

If you ask me, I see the leader of IMB sort of like Southern Baptists' Super Bowl coach in the NFL.

We know the story of the successful coach in the NFL, working tirelessly away from his family, all to recruit and coach up the next Super Bowl champion. Sometimes the effort works and the coach takes the team to football glory, and other times it does not. But the intensive effort is there, or there is no chance of victory.

The worldwide mission of

Jesus Christ, of course, cannot be compared to a game of sport. The part Southern Baptists play in His mission is of eternal importance, and winning the victory means successfully bringing millions of souls into the gates of glory. God has blessed Southern Baptists with the money, people and infrastructure to do it.

New ideas and new strategies are always good. My prayer for the next leader of the IMB is for that person to honor our SBC's missional past, while setting a new and exciting direction for the future.

See **MISSIONS** page 5

Pressing On

Tim Yarbrough

Phil. 3:14



Cartoon by Gary Thomas



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What did Jesus mean by the phrase, "Upon this rock" (Matt. 16:18)?

Caesarea Philippi, where Jesus spoke these words, also had a more sinister name: Panias. Panias was a scandalous place where people worshiped Pan, the Greek "goat-god" of fertility. Statues of Pan lined the area, and devoted followers gave sacrifices to it.

In this wicked place, Jesus asked His wide-eyed disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" (Matt. 16:13, ESV). They answered with the names of famous prophets: John the Baptist, Elijah and Jeremiah.

Then Jesus asked them the most important question:



Baptists Ask

Ken Gore

"Who do you say that I am?" (Matt. 16:15, ESV). When Simon blurted out, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16:16, ESV), Jesus

told him that he could only have received this confession through His "Father ... in heaven" (Matt. 16:17, ESV).

After Jesus called Simon by name and by the nickname Peter (petros, "stone"), He then stated, "On this rock (petra), I will build my church" (Matt. 16:18, ESV). Perhaps Jesus meant that the "rock" was Peter; if so, Peter became the founder of the Christian Church. Maybe Jesus meant that the "rock" was Peter's confession: Jesus is the Messiah and the Son of God. Peter's declaration, then, would be the foundation of the church.

A third possibility refers to the place where Jesus spoke. Panias, a "den of iniquity," full of sinful people, would be a great metaphorical location ("this rock") for the Church's beginning. Although the Church would be in places like this, the "gates of hell" (i.e., "death") would not overcome it.

During His ministry, Jesus attracted people who desperately needed Him – those who would be found in places like Panias. These sinners needed forgiveness, and Jesus brought forgiveness right to their doorstep. Even today, churches are places where the sin-sick get well, and they ought to be located in places where the healing can begin.

Ken Gore is professor of biblical studies at Dallas Baptist University. Send your questions to tim@arkansasbaptist.org.

MISSIONS

continued from page 4

I feel it takes both, and the mission of Christ to reconcile

the heart of man unto Him deserves no less than our exhaustive, "champion" effort.

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

The purpose and mission of the Arkansas Baptist News

The Arkansas Baptist News (ABN) exists to assist Kingdom work by informing, inspiring and involving Arkansas Baptists through meeting needs of people, spreading the gospel, making disciples and growing God's work in Arkansas and beyond.

As the largest religious publication in the state, the ABN strives for journalistic integrity, fairness and balance in its reporting of Baptist and evangelical news.

We advocate for the cause of Jesus Christ. We report the news based on our Christian worldview. We uphold high standards of journalism and Christian ethics.

Funding God's work

Why does God not fully fund His work? In Hagai 2:8 (NKJV) God declares, "The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine," and He says He will use it to declare the glory of His temple. Why does the God who owns the cattle on a thousand hills not invest in the vehicles that take His message to the nations?

These questions came up at the beginning of the Feed My Sheep campaign. At that time Camp Siloam was on the brink of no longer being able to continue ministry because of the old dining hall. During those days I was on my knees seeking God's provision.

A critical turning point in the campaign came when the Camp Siloam Board of Trustees voted to move forward with construction of the new dining hall though there was \$950,000 still to raise.

I prayed for days about whether to make that recom-

mendation to the board. "Trust me," was what the Lord kept saying in quiet moments when my thoughts were turned to Him. After the board voted to approve construction, things became very exciting, but I was plagued with worry.

I developed a tactic to deal with my worry based upon Philippians 4:6-8 (NKJV), "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

Each time I began to worry or doubt that God would provide for Camp Siloam, I would turn that thought of worry into a prayer. His reply was the thought, "Trust Me." I'd like to say the net result was walking in perfect peace, but the reality was less stel-

lar. What I did find was that those small prayers ceased the worry for that moment. If I was consistent to turn my worry into prayer, then I walked in God's presence.

I ran across a note in my Bible from a sermon that I had heard more than a year ago at a conference in Nashville, Tenn. The note was at the end of Habakkuk, and it stuck with me as I read it again last week; it read, "God's provision is His presence."

Upon reading that note, I thought that this is the answer to the question, "Why does God not fully fund His work?" It is because His provision is His presence in our lives. One thing that brings people to their knees is a financial need. Could it be that the Father is far more interested in you drawing close to Him than funding the work you are doing for Him?

Jason Wilkie is executive director of Camp Siloam. For more information about Camp Siloam visit campsiloam.org.



Camp Siloam

Jason Wilkie

Tax season is upon us

In December 2017, Congress passed the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017. The "tax bill" is the largest overhaul of the tax code since 1986. Although most of the provisions will not affect you until you file your taxes for 2018, there are some things to consider before you file your taxes this April and for the remainder of 2018.

Individual Retirement Account (IRA) contributions. IRAs can be an easy way for you to save for retirement. For 2017, you can contribute as much as \$5,500. If you are 50 years of age or older, you can make catch-up contributions of up to \$6,500 per year. Additionally, you can make IRA contributions for the previous tax year if they are made and designated for the previous tax year by the filing due date for your tax return.

529 Plans extended beyond college expenses. 529 Plans are tax-advantaged savings plans designed to encour-

age saving for future college expenses. In Arkansas, you can get a state income tax deduction for contributions up to \$5,000 per taxpayer made to the state-sponsored qualified tuition plan at arkansas529.org. The new tax bill extended these tax-

advantaged benefits beyond college expenses. You can now use 529 Plans to pay up to \$10,000 per student per year for private or religious elementary or secondary schools.

Charitable contribution deduction limit. The tax bill left the charitable deduction for taxpayers who itemize. Additionally, the limitation on the deductibility of cash gifts was increased from 50 to 60 percent of an individual's adjusted gross income (AGI). For any amounts that exceed

the charitable deduction limit, you can still carry forward this deduction for the next five years.

Unreimbursed employee business expenses. For tax years before 2018, an individual could deduct job and miscellaneous expenses, such as tools, supplies and unreimbursed travel and mileage that exceeded 2 percent of an individual's AGI. This deduction has been eliminated for 2018 through 2025.

2025 sunset. Much of the new tax bill is set to expire in 2025. However, this does not mean Congress will not change its mind before (or after) that.

Note: The above information is intended only for educational purposes and may not apply to your individual situation. You should seek advice from an attorney or CPA concerning

your individual situation. This communication does not constitute legal, tax or financial advice.

Dillon S. McClain, an attorney, is vice president of the Arkansas Baptist Foundation.



Baptist Foundation

Dillon McClain



HELP

continued from page one

While Loretta had originally believed that her husband would eventually be able to return to their home, things changed when she felt God tell her that she and the children needed to relocate to Batesville.

Miller began searching for a house for his family in Batesville.

"Every afternoon me and my son (sic) would go looking. We would either find a house that was too expensive or one that wasn't worth living in," said Miller. "One day Bill came in and said that he had found a house. So we went and looked at it. And I said, 'Who do I talk to?'"

"He said, 'Reta and I bought this house so y'all could afford the rent because the longer you and Loretta are apart the bigger wedge Satan is going to drive between you,'" said Miller.

The Millers moved into the home, and God began transforming their lives.

"God just started the restoration process," said Miller.

After reuniting his family in their new home in Batesville, Miller began doing jail ministry and supply preaching. In 1998 he was called as pastor of Pilgrim's Rest Baptist Church in Batesville, where he served 10 years.

While pastor at Pilgrim's Rest Baptist, and while still having two felony convictions on his record, Miller began work as a chaplain for the local sheriff's department and for Arkansas State Police.

It was not until 2003 that Miller would receive a full pardon through the Arkansas governor's office.

In 2007 after serving in full-time ministry for nearly a decade, Miller felt God calling him to pursue seminary education. In 2008 he resigned his position at Pilgrim's Rest and moved his family to Fort Worth, Texas, where he became a student at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, graduating in May 2011 with a Master of Arts in Christian Education.

In July 2011 Miller was hired as a chaplain for a Tyson Foods processing plant in Broken Bow, Okla., the same position that he maintains today.

"What I tell people is that I get paid to love on people," said Miller about his job.

On Feb. 11 of this year, Miller brought his family, including his children and grandchildren, to Petit Jean First Baptist Church in Morrilton, where Scroggs has served as pastor for nearly two decades.

Coordinating with church members, Miller planned a special time in which he thanked the Scroggs for the incredible role they played in his life and the lives of his family 25 years ago.

"I am not trying to lift Bill and Reta up. I'm trying to lift up our King - Jesus Christ," said Miller. "It's about their faithfulness."

In recognizing the faithfulness of the Scroggs, Miller



Chuck Miller and Bill Scroggs hug after Miller and his wife, Loretta, presented Scroggs and his wife, Reta (left), with a framed picture of a servant's feet with handwritten notes from the Miller family inscribed on the back (below, left) during the Sunday morning worship service at Petit Jean First Baptist Church in Morrilton Feb. 11. *Photos by Caleb Yarbrough*

vice Feb. 11, Miller presented the Scroggs with a framed picture of a servant's feet featuring notes from members of Miller's family handwritten on the back - each note representing a life, or an entire family of lives, affected by the Scroggs' faithfulness to one of their weaker brothers.

"I don't know if I could let somebody live with me, even if I knew them," said Miller. "Bill and Reta did the ultimate in my mind. ... Anyone that I have ministered to has come through Bill and Reta. He did that, but He uses people. It's very emotional when I get to thinking about it. They believed in

along well and show obvious signs of friendship, in many ways, they are polar opposites.

Miller is a large man by most standards and towers over Scroggs. The two men also seem to have different personalities. Scroggs, while warm, is reserved and not outwardly emotional. Miller is loud and outgoing, and he admits to being prone to shed tears at times.

Recognizing the two men's vast differences, it becomes impossible to hear their story without a recognition that God was at work throughout all of it.

"You don't think about somebody moving in like that, but as a Christian you have to say, 'I'll give whatever I've got, even if it's just a cup of water,'" Scroggs said.

"I didn't have a lot of room to give him," said Scroggs of when Miller moved in with his family 25 years ago. "He actually slept on my floor in my living room until we understood that we needed to get a place for him and his family. ... We

loved their family."

"As far as being polar opposites, I think God puts us together with people like that. We complement each other," said Scroggs. "If we were all like each other, we wouldn't need both of us."

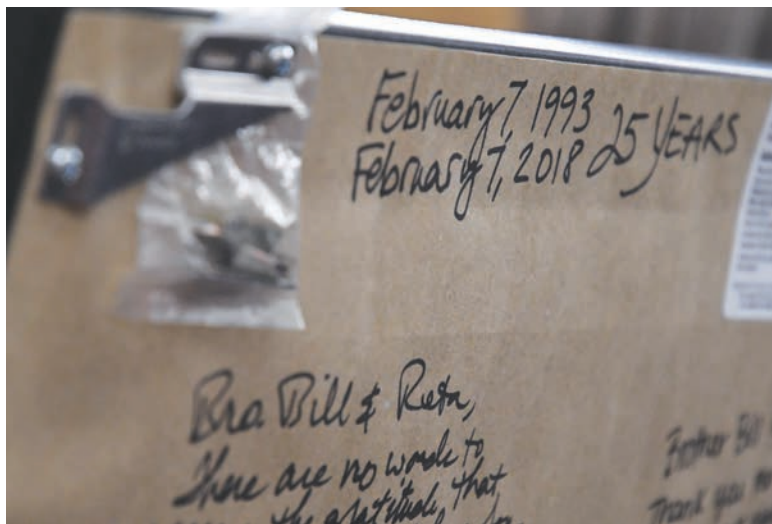
Scroggs said it is a blessing to see how God has grown and used Miller over the years and is thankful that God allowed him to play a role in the Miller family's story.

"It is kind of like Billy Graham and his Sunday school teacher," said Scroggs.

"Look at what Billy Graham did; he did so much more, but God used his Sunday school teacher to prepare him. ... Sometimes the pupil is greater than the teacher.

"That's kind of the way that God uses what each one of us does to impact the next person. And hopefully they can make a bigger impact than we did," he said.

Contact Caleb Yarbrough at caleb@arkansasbaptist.org.

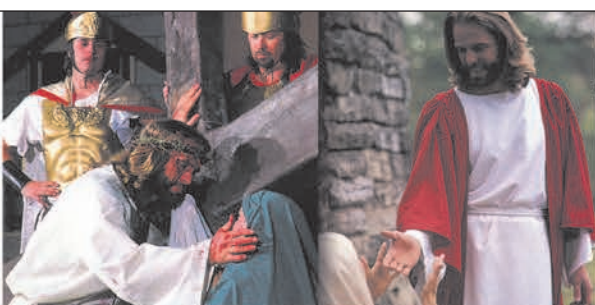


paraphrased Galatians 6:1, "Those of you who are spiritual, lift up a weaker brother."

Following a brief time of sharing during the Sunday ser-

me."

When you are in the same room with Scroggs and Miller, it becomes quickly apparent that, while the two men get



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Gift of building sparks growth of Ky. church plant

Tobin Perry
NAMB

OWENSBORO, Ky. — Most pastors wouldn't consider it a landmark day when a fire destroys a church's office space and future ministry hub.

But Kenny Rager does.

In May 2016, a fire ravaged the storefront offices that Life Community Church in Owensboro, Ky., had hoped to turn into a space for local student ministry efforts. Although the five-year-old church plant met at a local community college for worship services, the loss of office space could have been devastating.

"It felt like our future was

taken from us," Rager said. "Little did we know that God was going to use a fire not to take away our future but to give us a future."

Churches throughout Owensboro contacted Life Community to see how they could help the church plant.

One of those churches was Hall Street Baptist Church, which offered to let Life Community use part of its building as temporary office space.

Hall Street was clearly in decline. For three months, the gifts Life Community gave to the church in gratitude literally kept the lights on.

That's when Hall Street leaders came to Rager with an

offer. The 108-year-old Hall Street Baptist Church was dissolving and wanted to give its building to Life Community at no cost.

At first, Rager turned it down. Instead, he wanted to help Hall Street restructure and restart. But Hall Street leaders were ready to pass on the building and move on.

Not only did Hall Street give the young church plant a sanctuary that seats 600 people, but also a 15-year-old Christian Life Center that includes a full-size basketball court.

After a little more than a year in the building, the church has grown from 200 regular attendees to 300.



Life Community Church in Owensboro, Ky., worships in the gymnasium given to it by Hall Street Baptist Church. The church is in the midst of renovating the sanctuary and hopes to worship in it soon. *Photo courtesy of Life Community Church*

“**A REPLANT IS NOT SOMETHING TO BE ASHAMED OF OR TO RUN AWAY FROM. GOD IS DOING SOMETHING NEW IN SOMETHING OLD.**”

Mark Clifton | Revitalize & Replant Podcast with Thom Rainer



Learn more at
RevitalizeAndReplant.com

'Answer to prayer'

Mark Clifton, senior director of replanting for the North American Mission Board (NAMB), said Life Community's story illustrates a larger trend in Southern Baptist life.

"The story of replanting churches in North America is an answer to the prayers of so many Christians," Clifton said. "For years, we've been praying that God would resurrect dying churches. That's what we're seeing as dying churches like Hall Street hand off their buildings to new church plants like Life Community. In my lifetime I've never seen growing, healthy churches demonstrate such a passion for helping struggling churches. It has to be an answer to prayer."

Last year alone, NAMB identified 135 churches involved in a replanting process, but that number is likely just a fraction of the real total. Clifton says NAMB doesn't have a complete picture of how many churches are involved in replanting today. In fact, Clifton didn't hear about Life Community's story until early 2018.

Nearly 1,000 Southern Baptist churches drop off the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) database each year, many because they are closing their doors forever.

Without a strategic replanting process in mind, many of these congregations would give or sell their properties to other local establishments — from worship halls for other faiths to bars and restaurants.

Clifton believes this is tragic.

"The church is today, more than ever, a bulwark of truth," Clifton said. "We need every church. We can't lose them. God is using replanting to make sure this happens."

This is why Paul Chitwood, executive director-treasurer of the Kentucky Baptist Convention (KBC), helps churches like Life Community throughout the replanting process.

"Our KBC staff was also blessed to assist when the growing Life Community congregation began conversations with Hall Street Baptist Church about the Hall Street property being given over to Life Community," Chitwood said.

"It was a beautiful picture of the kind of sacrificial generosity that allowed the resources of a struggling church to remain in the Baptist family and be used to richly bless a young, growing church. Now in the hands of Life Community, the Hall Street property has once again become a thriving force for the gospel in Owensboro. We hope to see more sacrificial gifts like this one rather than church buildings being abandoned or sold."

Local associations, state conventions and NAMB all play a role in helping dying churches either find new life as a congregation, merge with a healthy church, become a campus of a larger church or, as in the case of Hall Street Baptist Church, pass on their buildings to a church plant.

But no matter which avenue a church chooses, replanting begins with a struggling church making a courageous decision.

"Replanting starts with a church's realization that they

can no longer do ministry as they've been doing it and expect new results," said Bob Bickford, NAMB's associate director of replanting. "It's not about a program or a study or a new promotional piece sent out to the community. It's not about inviting people to come to a church for a program or a service or an event. It's about a church being honest before God and saying, 'What we've been doing hasn't been working.'"

NAMB provides a number of resources to help raise the visibility of replanting throughout the SBC, including a new podcast hosted by Clifton and LifeWay Christian Resources President Thom Rainer. Each episode of "Revitalize and Replant" focuses on a different issue facing those involved in the replanting process.

Past topics have included: the characteristics of an effective church replanter, unseen signs of a declining church and how to organize a replant.

"Our role nationally is to connect all the dots," Clifton said. "We're showing what God is doing through replanting and changing the old narrative — that dying churches are bad places to avoid. Dying churches are great places to go to and great places for God's glory to be seen. We also do what we can to train state conventions and local associations to contextualize replanting in their area."

For more information about NAMB's church replanting efforts, visit namb.net/church-replanting.

Tobin Perry writes for the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board.

Key tips for choosing the right college

Lori Motl
Ouachita Baptist University

ARKADELPHIA – For families with high school seniors, finding the college that is the right fit is a major decision. Here are a few tips for parents and students as they work together through the process:

Make a list of what things are important and what

aren't. For some students, it may be important to be involved in extracurricular activities. For others, it may be all about the

quality of education or social life at the school. Talk as a family about what is important for your student's college experience, and then ask questions about these things when you visit campus.

Share your parental wisdom and experience. Some parents have been in this exact spot before. You've been to college, and you know what mattered while you were in school and after you graduated. For those who didn't attend college, you still have years of life experience and wisdom to rely on. Don't be shy about sharing your perspective.

Encourage your student to take ownership of the decision. Remember, they are the ones going to college and spending the next four years of their lives there. Help them rule out schools when they

don't feel right, and invest in learning more about the ones that do. Help them make an informed decision they can feel confident in.

Don't be afraid to talk about the big issues. For a lot of families, it can be uncomfortable to discuss finances and to address how college can affect the family's situation. If finances are a big concern, then go through the process. Do the work, and you'll find that a lot of colleges are within your reach. If loans are a part of that, that's OK. Loans can be a really good tool if you use them carefully; you need to use all the tools in that financial aid toolbox.

Don't stress over the little things. Choosing a major may seem like a make-or-break decision. But according to the National Center for Education Statistics, about 80 percent of students change their major at least once in college. Be careful to look at the entire academic experience that a school has to offer rather than a single major you think you have your heart set on.

Keep the lines of communication open; maybe schedule a campus tour; make a list of questions for your admissions counselor, or go ahead and get your application in. Ouachita Baptist University's application has no fee and no essay, so there's nothing to lose. Visit obu.edu/apply for more information.

Lori Motl is director of the office of admissions counseling at Ouachita Baptist University.



Students walk to class on the campus of Ouachita Baptist University. Photo courtesy of Ouachita Baptist University





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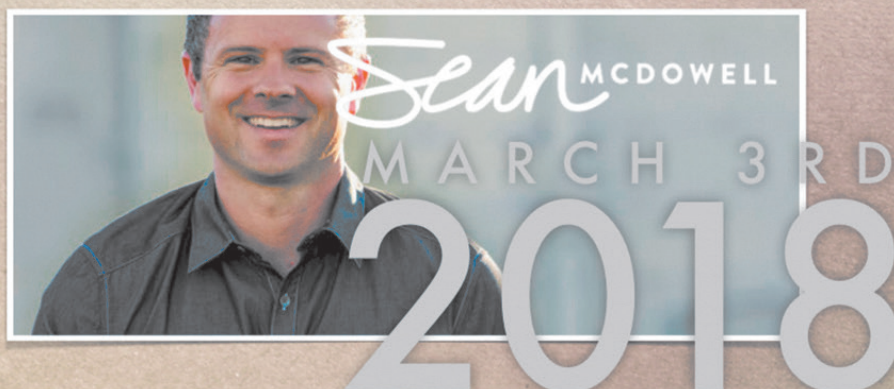
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University: What's in a name?

Grace Stolz
 Williams Baptist College

WALNUT RIDGE – After 76 years as a college, and 26 years as Williams Baptist College (WBC), there is a big change coming. Williams will formally become Williams Baptist University (WBU) this summer, and the transition is already well underway.



Stolz

“When we made the university announcement in September, we set July 1, 2018, as our official transition date. That gave us a few months to make a lot of changes in signage, stationery, Web addresses and other areas, and we are making good progress on those fronts,” said Brett Cooper, vice president for institutional advancement.

There is much to change. A large, illuminated sign along Highway 67 and the Harty-Blackwell Entry Gate on Fulbright Ave. will both be changed in coming months, as will other signage on campus. All letterhead, envelopes and business cards have to be changed as well.

One of the biggest challenges, however, will be changing the school's Internet and email addresses.

“Everything that is wbcoll.edu will have to be changed this summer, which is a really big job for our IT department,” Cooper said. “That involves making changes to

every computer on campus, and it also means all our email addresses have to be converted to williamsbu.edu, which will be our new address.”

Williams has already bought and activated other domain names, including williamsbaptistuniversity.com, which directs to the main Williams website, and wbueagles.com, which goes to the athletics website.

While this is the last year to operate as WBC, several areas at Williams have already made the move to WBU. The rule of thumb has been that current activities remain WBC for this school year, while efforts aimed at recruiting students for next fall feature WBU.

“The last class from Williams Baptist College will graduate in May, and our athletic teams are competing this year as WBC, but our advertising and recruiting materials already say WBU. It has been a fun transition, and we have noticed that with each passing day, Williams is a little less WBC and a little more WBU,” Cooper said.

There will be a final flurry of activity this summer to complete all the planned changes around Williams, as the last vestiges of WBC give way to WBU. When students return to school in the fall, they will roll onto a campus that is fully transformed into Williams Baptist University.

Grace Stolz is coordinator of public relations at Williams Baptist College, which will soon be known as Williams Baptist University.



WILLIAMS
 BAPTIST UNIVERSITY

Williams Baptist College will formally become Williams Baptist University (WBU) this summer. A major transition to the new name is now underway and includes signage, letterhead, envelopes and business cards as well as website changes.

FEMA funds for disaster-stricken churches law

WASHINGTON (BP) – Churches and other houses of worship now have the assurance of federal law that they may receive disaster relief funds.

Congress approved Feb. 9, as part of the latest budget bill, a measure making houses of worship eligible for public assistance money for the restoration of damaged buildings and other purposes from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in the aftermath of such disasters as hurricanes and tornadoes. President Donald Trump

signed the legislation into law the same day.

The bill's enactment places into federal law and gives permanence to a new FEMA



FEMA

interpretation issued in early January. At that time, the agency announced it would no longer exclude houses of worship from its aid, which provides for debris removal, emergency

protection and the rebuilding of facilities for some private nonprofit organizations.

"Congress has delivered a big victory for houses of worship everywhere," said Diana Verm, legal counsel at Becket, the nonprofit religious liberty organization that represents the Texas churches and Florida synagogues that had sued the federal government.

"It was always strange to tell houses of worship that there is no room at the inn, when they are the first to help in time of need. Congress has now put this troubling history of dis-

crimination behind us."

FEMA had prohibited houses of worship from receiving disaster assistance for several decades, according to Becket. Three Texas churches challenged FEMA's policy in

federal court after Hurricane Harvey caused damage to their buildings in August, and two Florida synagogues brought suit after Hurricane Irma harmed their facilities in September.

Longtime associational missionary suffers stroke

SAGE – S.D. Hacker of Sage, longtime associational missionary for Rocky Bayou Association, is recovering following a stroke Feb. 9.

Hacker, who serves on the Arkansas Baptist News Board of Directors, was recovering in a Little Rock hospital where he was in the Neurosurgery ICU as of press time.

According to a post on the association's Facebook page, Hacker has been quite the joker while in ICU, responding to the neurologist when asked about his speech, "I'm older than Moses was when he led the children (out of Egypt) ..." to an eruption of laughter.

Prayers for Hacker's swift recovery are appreciated.

Attempted carjacking at LR's Immanuel

LITTLE ROCK – One of two failed carjacking attempts in west Little Rock Feb. 7 occurred shortly before 8 p.m. at Immanuel Baptist Church, 501 N. Shackleford Road, police report.

Gene Bowman, 75, of Sherwood, told a local TV station the incident occurred just outside the church entrance when he was picking up his wife after choir practice.

Bowman said two masked men tried to pull him from his car, KARK-TV reported.

The victim noted that the pair grabbed him by his left arm and attempted to pull him out of his 2007 Cadillac STS.

"I was hollering 'Help, help, get out of here,'" he said.

That's when Bowman, an insurance salesman, stopped talking and started swinging his fists. "When they let go of me, I swung," Bowman said. "That whole thing was probably less than 30 seconds."

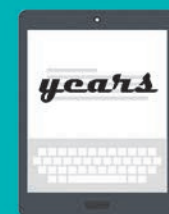
The Arkansas Democrat-Gazette reported that police said the incident at Immanuel was

one of two carjacking attempts in the area that same evening, apparently by the same culprits driving a black Lexus.

The robbers were described as black males who wore all-black clothing and black ski masks.

They reportedly stand about 5 feet 6 inches tall and weigh around 130 pounds. No arrests have been made in this case, but police reports show officers are aware of a suspect vehicle, along with license plates and possible owner.

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Arkansas
BAPTISTS

350 attend Super Winter weekend in Lonsdale

LONSDALE – Teenagers, college students and adults from across Arkansas gathered at Spring Lake Baptist Assembly over the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday weekend for Super Winter 2018.

Keynote speaker Bill Newton, youth pastor at First Baptist Church, Hot Springs, shared messages around the theme “Defined,” from Exodus 5:2, answering the question, “Who is the Lord?”



In all, 350 individuals from Arkansas, Texas and Louisiana participated in the four-day church camp experience, only in mid-winter instead of summer.

Attendees played in a 300-person Ultimate Frisbee tournament and round-robin recreation games; viewed the movie, “The Case for Christ”

and participated in an “underground church” experience, which simulated challenges faced by Christians living in countries that are hostile to the gospel.

Students chose from a variety of teaching sessions, learning about subjects such as the call to ministry, evangelism training, Bible interpretation, counterfeit Christianity, dealing with stress, as well as a Q-and-A dialogue between

youth pastors and students. Worship was led by Summerhill, a worship band based in Conway.

“God continues to use Super Winter to challenge and grow the students in my ministry. I enjoy working with other youth pastors to make an event like this happen,” said Travis Johnson, youth pastor at Grace Baptist



Students worship at Spring Lake Baptist Assembly over the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday weekend during Super Winter 2018.

Church, Camden.

Garrett Lenzen, youth pastor at First Baptist Church, Morrilton, noted, “My students really enjoyed their first year at Super Winter. They had a chance to engage with Christ through great preaching

and powerful worship. I look forward to taking them back for many years to come!”

Carmen Meadows, a Super Winter staffer, said, “Super Winter was an amazing experience for me as a student and now is as a staffer. You make

friendships that last well beyond camp, and you are given tools that help you walk the path God has for you.”

Super Winter is an annual event. For information about the 2019 event visit superwinter.org.

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BILL ELLIFF

Obituaries

Billy Harold Fowlkes, 85, died Feb. 8.



Fowlkes was a teacher as a young adult, then later served as minister of music, minister of education and as associate pastor in churches throughout Arkansas, Oklahoma and Texas.

While attending Arkansas State Teacher's College (now the University of Central Arkansas) he led music at Mount Vernon Baptist Church in Mount Vernon and Second Baptist Church in Conway.

After college he served at First Baptist Church in DeWitt and Park Place Baptist Church in Hot Springs.

Fowlkes retired from First Baptist Church in Euless, Texas, where he was associate pastor of pastoral care.

In his latter years Fowlkes was a member of First Baptist Church in Heber Springs, also serving with Nail Benders for Jesus, a construction mission

associated with the Arkansas Baptist State Convention. He was preceded in death by his wife of 62 years, Jettavee. He is survived by a brother, two daughters, six grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren.

Funeral services were held Feb. 11 at First Baptist Church in Heber Springs.

Burial took place at Antioch Cemetery in Drasco (Clebourn County).

Church life

Holly Springs Baptist Church in Holly Springs will host the 2018 Terry "Taco" Howard memorial trail and ATV ride Saturday, April 7.

The event also includes a car display, concert, barbecue lunch and live auction.

For more information call 870-687-1962.

On the move

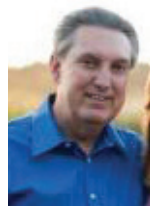
Michael Daugherty is serving as pastor of First Baptist Church in Sheridan. He previously served as interim pastor at Antioch Baptist Church in Aubrey, Texas.

Milestones

A celebration honoring **Ken Shaddox**, senior pastor of Park Hill Baptist Church in North Little Rock for 10 years of service, will be held 2-4 p.m., March 4, in the fellowship hall at the church.



A celebration in honor of **Robbie Jackson**, pastor of East Mount Zion Trinity Baptist Church in Clarksville for the past 30 years, will be held at 10:55 a.m., Sunday, March 4. Jackson began serving on March 1, 1988.



A potluck lunch will be served following the service.

For more information, call the church office at 479-754-7609.

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FBC SHERIDAN ORDINATIONS — First Baptist Church in Sheridan ordained six deacons on Sunday, Dec. 10, during its evening service. They are (from left), Cory Johnson, Brian Warner, Steve Sites; (back row) Danny Poe, Jason Roshto and Joe Bratton.

OBU Christian counseling conference Feb. 23

ARKADELPHIA — Ouachita Baptist University's Pruet School of Christian Studies will host the eighth annual Conference on Issues in Christian Counseling on Feb. 23 in Walker Conference Center. This year's focus is "Issues in Marriage."

The conference is co-sponsored by Ouachita and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, and a pastoral track

is sponsored by the Arkansas Baptist State Convention. The conference is open to mental health professionals, social workers, pastors, current full-time students and any of their spouses.

Eight hours of National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC) credit has been approved for professionals who attend the conference's counseling track.

Classifieds

PASTOR

Finch Baptist Church, Paragould, AR, is searching for a **full-time pastor**. Send resume addressed to Search Team, 3797 Greene 715 RD, Paragould, AR 72450.

First Baptist Church of Murfreesboro, AR, is seeking a **full-time pastor**. Please send resume to: Attn: Pastor Search Committee, 500 S. Washington, Murfreesboro, AR 71958; Email: fbcmurfreesboro@att.net.

Bi-vocational/full-time pastor of New Hope Baptist Church- Conway, AR. We are a friendly, loving, Southern Baptist church family looking for a pastor. Please submit resume and references to 356 Hwy 64 E, Conway, AR 72032 or email to newhope@tcworks.net. We will accept resumes until March 12.

Bi-vocational pastors needed throughout southeastern Oklahoma. Some churches provide parsonages. Please send resumes to: Frisco Baptist Association, P.O. Box 888, Hugo, OK 74743.

Calvary Baptist Church, W. Siloam Springs, OK., is searching for a **full-time pastor** with a heart to use his leadership skills and experience to help lead our members to reach out to our surrounding area and community with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Contact Pastor's Search Comm., Calvary Baptist Church, 7727 Cedar Dr., W. Siloam Springs, OK. 74338.

First Baptist Church of Maumelle is seeking **full-time pastor**. Please send resume to First Baptist Church of Maumelle, ATTN: Pastor Search Committee, 100 Valencia Dr., Maumelle, AR 72113, or email to: searchcommittee@fbcmaumelle.org

gmail.com.

Are you the pastor that God has selected to lead a Southern Baptist church in NW Arkansas? We are a church that was established in 1981 looking for a **full-time pastor** to grow our congregation in a growing community. Please submit resume to NWAPastorSearch@gmail.com.

Central Baptist Church, Hot Springs, is seeking **full-time pastor**. Send resume to: CBC 1035 Central Avenue, Hot Springs, AR 71901; Email: centralbaptist1035@att.net.

Floral Baptist Church of Floral, Arkansas, is seeking a **full-time pastor**. Send resumes and references to Floral Baptist Church, P.O. Box 96, Floral, AR 72534.

Cedar Grove Baptist Church of Arkadelphia is seeking a **bi-vocational pastor**. Send resumes and references to Cedar Grove Baptist Church, 825 Cedar Grove Road, Arkadelphia, AR 71923.

OTHER STAFF POSITIONS

Hillcrest Baptist Church in Jasper, Texas, is prayerfully seeking a **full-time music minister**. Send resumes to debbie_hillcrest@yahoo.com, or call 409-384-3371.

Levy Church, NLR, seeks **part-time minister of music**. Send resumes to: steven-tiner@levybaptist.com.

Bi-vocational worship pastor for blended service. FBC Pea Ridge. 479-451-8192. To submit resume or request more info - al@prfbc.org.

First Baptist Church, Siloam Springs, AR is seeking a **full-time worship pastor**. Submit resumes to: searchteam@fbc-siloam.com or Worship Pastor Search Team, 2000 Dawn Hill Road, Siloam Springs, AR 72761. Deadline for resumes: April 1, 2018.

Seeking **full-time children's ministries pastor or director**: East Side of Paragould is seeking the Lord's qualified candidate to lead a thriving children's ministry and to assist our families in parenting and disciple making. We are a loving and serving church in a growing community with quality schools. Send resume to Phillip Miller: pmiller@connect2eastside.com.

New Chapel Hill Baptist, West Monroe, LA, seeking **full-time children's minister**. Send resumes to melinda@nchbc.net.

Concord Baptist Church, a vibrant and growing church in Anderson, SC, is seeking an **associate pastor for worship and music**. This person must have the calling, gifting, training and heart to lead a large and diverse ministry of worship. We are excited about our future! For a job description and/or to submit a resume/profile please contact jjames@concordbaptist.com. Please also visit concordbaptist.com for more information about our congregation.

Seeking experienced **youth or youth/worship pastor**. Miner Baptist Church Sikeston, Missouri (conservative SBC). Send Resume to jbarnhart@minerbaptist.org.

Ruddell Hill Baptist Church, Batesville, is seeking **part-time youth minister**. Please send resumes to ruddellhillpastor@gmail.com.

FBC Canton, TX - conservative, growing con-

gregation with Christ-centered vision seeking **team member with calling to children's ministry**/3 yrs. experience (preferred)/ desire to be a part of our vision for growth/responsible for VBS, AWANA, and all other children's ministry/Send resume/references to libby@firstcanton.com/open through March 31, 2018.

Balboa Baptist Church, Hot Springs Village, AR, is receiving resumes for **church administrator/associate pastor**. Candidate must have a college degree; a Southern Baptist related seminary degree; excellent computer skills such as maintaining a website, Facebook, email, PowerPoint, etc. Go to www.BalboaBaptist.church/Who-We-Are/employment.

Pleasant Hill Baptist Church is seeking a **full-time youth pastor**. Please send resume to: Pleasant Hill Baptist Church, 24310 N. Sardis Rd., Bauxite, AR 72011 Attn: David Littleton.

Cross View is accepting resumes for **youth pastor**. Position will possibly evolve into associate pastor. Send resume to: Cross View Baptist Church, 3268 N. FM 2148, Texarkana, TX 75503, ATTN: Youth Search Committee.

Pleasant Grove Baptist Church is looking for a **bi-vocational youth pastor** to love on & lead our youth as we continue to grow for God's glory and our good! Please send resumes to Pastor Chris Kinzler @ ckinzler@pleasantgrovel.org.

First Baptist Church of Bay, AR (located just outside of Jonesboro) is seeking a **part-time minister of music** who is committed to leading a blended worship service. Resumes may be mailed to First Baptist Church, PO Box 190, Bay, AR, 72411 or submitted to

www.bayfbc.org.

Associate pastor of worship. Grace Baptist Church in Belleville, AR, is seeking to hire a worship leader who can lead God's people into a greater worship experience. Grace is a growing church and duties will include administrative skills as well as music skills. The pay package is negotiable and does include a parsonage. Please mail resumes to PO Box 27 Belleville, AR 72824, or email Logan Ferguson at revlferg@yahoo.com.

Judsonia First Baptist Church is in search of a **part-time youth director**. All who are interested please contact Blake Moffett at Blake.moffett@enbridge.com or 501-283-4187.

Perryville FBC is seeking a **bi-vocational music director**. Send resumes to pvfbc.church@gmail.com.

First Baptist Church of El Dorado, AR, is seeking to hire an **associate pastor of worship**. This full-time position is responsible for developing and leading a church-wide worship ministry, which promotes the development of fully devoted followers of Jesus. Interested candidates can submit a resume with cover letter by mail (200 W. Main El Dorado, AR) or email jona-than.kelley@fbceldorado.org.

OTHER STAFF POSITIONS

Church General Counsel helps Arkansas Baptist churches balance church growth and ministry needs with legal compliance and risk management very affordably. Learn more at www.churchgeneralcounsel.com.

GuideStone offers single-staff churches health care solutions

DALLAS – Continued uncertainty in the health care marketplace – with the repeal of the individual mandate coming in 2019 and reductions in the number of individuals served by the health care exchanges – has some pastors and ministry workers wondering about health care options this year.

As the Affordable Care Act continues to drive up costs for consumers nationwide, GuideStone recognizes that affordability is an issue for everyone. While all are not immune from the financial pressures caused by the 2010 law, GuideStone is working to develop options that reflect the

values of its participants and keep costs extremely competitive in the marketplace.

GuideStone's Personal Plans health plans may be options for churches with a single staff member, usually the pastor, said GuideStone President O.S. Hawkins.



"We take seriously our ministry assignment from Southern Baptists to make 'available life

and health coverage,' to our churches and ministry organizations, especially those pastors serving out at the crossroads," Hawkins said. "We'd encourage any pastor of a single staff-member church to call GuideStone and see if we

may be able to serve him and his family."

For GuideStone to serve a pastor or other single staff member, he must be a paid employee of an eligible church or ministry that is affiliated

with or shares common religious bonds with the Southern Baptist Convention and works 20 or more hours per week.

GuideStone's personal health care coverage options include traditional PPO plans,

an economy PPO plan and a federally-qualified High Deductible Health Plan designed to be paired with a Health Savings Account.

For more information visit guidestoneinsurance.org.

ABF announces \$120K in surplus gifts

LITTLE ROCK – Surplus gifts – in excess of \$120,000 – to Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC) agencies, entities and institutions were announced Feb. 8 at the Arkansas Baptist Foundation Board of Directors meeting.

The surplus funds have been distributed based on the 2018 Unified Cooperative Program Budget Formula. ABSC Executive Director J.D. "Sonny" Tucker led in a time of prayer as he commis-

sioned the 2018 Foundation board and officers into service.

Greg Sykes, senior pastor of First Baptist Church in Russellville, shared a devotional

and cultivate an appetite for the wisdom of God by delighting in His Word daily.

In other action, the board approved 38 scholarship awards for the 2018-19 school year and celebrated the successful completion of Camp Siloam's



on Psalm 1, asking the question, "What does your spiritual diet look like?" Sykes presented two steps that he said should be maintained for a healthy spiritual diet: flee sin

Feed My Sheep campaign.

The meeting closed with Tucker leading a panel discussion with representatives from each of the ABSC ministry teams.

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\$215,000 GIFT TO WILLIAMS – Kenneth Startup (right), interim president of Williams Baptist College, receives a \$215,000 gift from the estate of alumnus Norman Harty of Dexter, Mo., from Justin Daubert, a 2012 graduate of Williams, who is the compliance officer at First Commercial Bank in Dexter, where Harty's corporation has a controlling interest. Harty was a 1962 graduate of Williams and a longtime supporter of the school. Startup said Williams is designating the Harty funds to scholarships and the university endowment. *Williams Baptist College photo*

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Faith & Culture

"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind..."

Romans 12:2 (ESV)

Marvin unites love for hockey and for God at Olympics

GANGNEUNG, South Korea (BP) – Sometimes, Gigi Marvin still feels like the same 11-year-old girl growing up in northern Minnesota who fell in love with the idea of playing hockey in the Olympics.

Maybe that's why she's so passionate about RinkRat, a weeklong hockey camp she runs each summer that draws about 170 kids. While they definitely learn about hockey from one of the sport's most accomplished women, they also encounter Gigi's unbridled love for the Lord.

"Even though it's not marketed as, 'Hey, you're gonna experience the Lord,' it's gonna come out," Marvin said. "Because my intention is for God to come out in all areas. That's just how I live life."

Marvin is making her third Olympics appearance as part of the U.S. women's hockey team, winning two silver medals along the way.

Growing up with a dad who played hockey professionally and brothers who played hockey, she didn't have much of a choice when it came to the sport.

"The skates were going on no matter what," she joked.

"But I'm just thankful, because I fell in love with it, and still love it."

Her Olympic dream began in 1998 when she saw the U.S. women's hockey team in the Olympics for the first time. Until then, she played with her friends but never gave a lot of thought to her future in the sport. Then the Olympics happened, and the light came on – women's hockey was "an actual thing," Marvin said. "I can really do that."

She grew up in a Christian home in the small town of Warroad, with her family attending church regularly. But it wasn't until Marvin enrolled at the University of Minnesota and got involved with the Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA) that she began to see serious growth in her relationship with the Lord.

Through FCA, Marvin en-

countered people who taught her how to read the Bible and apply it to her life, how to pray and pray for others. That modeling of discipleship helped

God and letting Jesus work through you, letting Him live through you," she said.

Marvin's time in Boston as a member of both the Boston Blades and Boston Pride women's hockey teams has also been instrumental in her growth as a Christian. She's actively involved in her church when she's in Boston, and she went through a year-long discipleship training school there that culminated in a mission trip to Morocco.

She's enthusiastic about how she grew as a Christian through that experience, and she's equally as enthusiastic about the work she's doing with children in Minnesota each summer. This

year will be the 11th year for Marvin to run the RinkRat hockey camps – each a week long.

What began with a desire for Marvin to teach and share what she's learned about hockey has grown into something far more meaningful for her. She offers faith and worship nights for her campers and their families. She's handed out Bibles to her coaches and been able to pray with kids and their parents about various needs.

She loves helping the kids learn what their strengths are. But more than that, she loves helping show them who God is.

"I pray that kids will come and know who God is, and then how much He loves them," Marvin said. "But then also how He created each one of them with a specific purpose, because knowing your identity in Christ and then letting Him live through you is, I mean, a gift to everyone."



U.S. women's hockey player Gigi Marvin, in her third Olympics, reflects her passion for "having a relationship with God and letting Jesus work through you." Photo by David McIntyre/Genesis Photos

her realize that devotion to God is not about religion.

"It's not about anything but having a relationship with

Churches on solid ground as economy rebounds

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – Church collection plates were a little bit fuller last fall, according to Nashville-based LifeWay Research.

About 40 percent of Protestant pastors say their churches received more offerings in 2017 than in 2016. Three-quarters say their church met or exceeded budget. And only about a third say the economy gave their church trouble.

Those are among the findings of a new report from LifeWay Research, based on a survey of 1,000 Protestant senior pastors. LifeWay Research has tracked the impact of the economy on churches since 2009, said Scott McConnell, executive director, and this is

the first time the majority of pastors said the economy isn't troubling their church.

"The past decade has been difficult for many church budgets," said McConnell. "But things seem to be looking up."

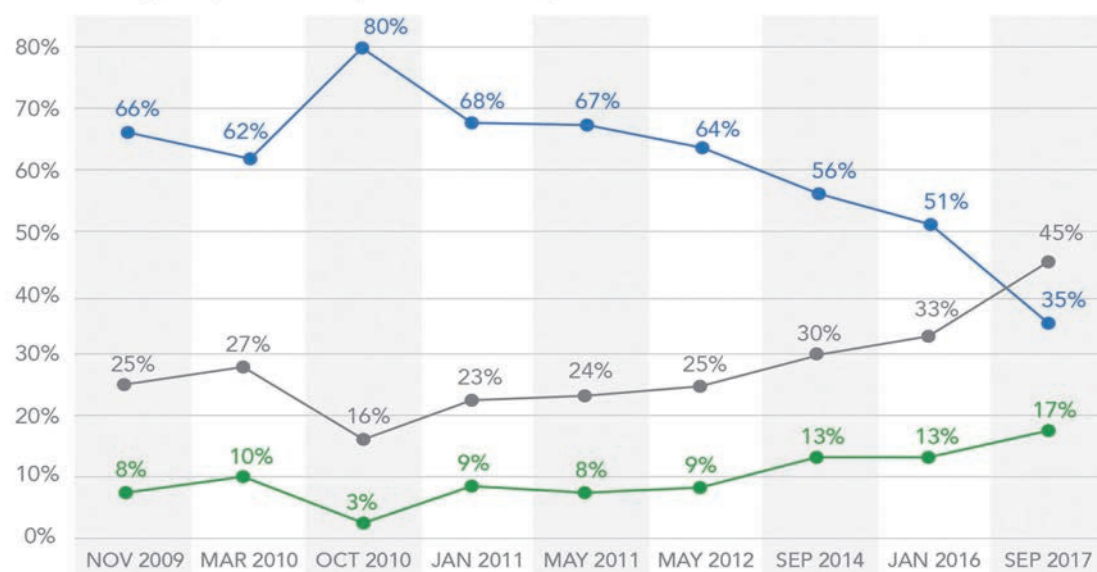
At the height of the Great Recession in 2010, LifeWay Research found most pastors (80 percent) said the economy had a negative effect on the church budget. That dropped to 51 percent by March 2016.

In the most recent survey – from the fall of 2017 – 35 percent of pastors say the economy had a negative impact on the church. Seventeen percent cite a positive impact, and 45 percent say no impact.

How is the current economy impacting your church?

Among Protestant pastors

● Negatively ● No Impact ● Positively



Notes: Don't Know (3% JAN 2016, 2% SEP 2014 and SEP 2017, 1% all other surveys)
Does not equal 100% due to rounding.

MARCH 4, 2018

In 1 Corinthians 1:10-25, the Apostle Paul addressed an issue that is as relevant today as it was 2,000 years ago – a lack of unity among Christians.

Paul was not calling all believers to agree on everything, but he was calling them to agree on the basics of the faith, chief of those being a unified confession of Christ as the one and only power to save humans from their sins.

Paul rebuked the Corinthians for basing their faith on religious leaders instead of on Christ.

“Each of you says, ‘I’m with Paul,’ or ‘I’m with Apollos,’ or ‘I’m with Cephas,’ or ‘I’m with Christ.’ Is Christ divided? Was it Paul who was crucified for you? Or were you baptized in Paul’s name?” (1 Cor. 1:12-13)

Paul emphasized that the world’s wisdom is not capable of understanding Christ and His work on the cross, “the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but it is God’s power to us who are being saved” (1 Cor. 1:18).

Paul separates all of humanity into two camps: those perishing and those being saved.

Musician Bob Dylan got it exactly right in his 1965 classic, “It’s Alright, Ma (I’m Only Bleeding)”: “he not busy being born is busy dying.”

There are only two possibilities for each of us: we are either dying or being reborn through the power of Christ.

The interesting thing about this passage is that Paul was not addressing non-believers but believers. He was rebuking the Corinthian Christians for losing sight of the basic truth that

Christ alone is our Savior and that our confession of Him as Lord is the only way we are saved.

Like the Corinthians in this passage, today’s church often gets caught up in cultural, political and theological fads.

While there is nothing wrong with reading the most recent Christian best seller, we cannot lose sight of the fact that “God’s foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God’s weakness is stronger than human strength” (1 Cor. 1:25).

While Christians may disagree on some interpretations and theological points – we must all confess, “Jesus Christ and Him crucified” (1 Cor. 2:2).

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

United in Christ

1 CORINTHIANS 1:10-25 (HCSB)

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

Our Provider

GENESIS 22:1-14 (HCSB)

to fully understand God’s ways but, through the gift of faith, God provides us everlasting life and peace.

It seems barbaric that God would call Abraham to sacrifice his own son. It doesn’t seem ethical or rational. It doesn’t seem like something that a loving God would do – but neither does the fact that God would sacrifice His one and only Son in order to save sinners.

As the passage goes, God stopped Abraham from taking Isaac’s life, providing a ram to sacrifice in his place. It was a powerful foreshad-

owing of the Lamb that God would later provide as the sacrifice for all who would place their faith in Him.

As impossible as it is for any of us to consider sacrificing a loved one, how much more impossible is it to consider the God of the universe sending His one and only Son to save sinners?

Whether in God’s calling Abraham to sacrifice his child or in His decision to send Jesus to save His people – to God be the glory! He is our Provider, even in the most impossible of circumstances.

MARCH 11, 2018

One of the beautiful things about the gospel is the freedom it provides to those who are in Christ.

In 1 Corinthians 6:12, the Apostle Paul told the Corinthian Christians, “Everything is permissible for me,” but not everything is helpful. “Everything is permissible for me,” but I will not be brought under the control of anything.”

Paul was saying that while nothing, that is not blatantly sinful, is off limits for believers, each of us must be careful to not allow temporal things to control us – even things that are not inherently evil can become evil if they are allowed to control us.

On the contrary, Paul reminded the Corinthian believers that “anyone joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him” (1 Cor. 6:17).

Paul challenged the Corinthians to flee from sexual immorality because, as believers, they were the “sanctuary of the Holy Spirit” (1 Cor. 6:19). He also specified that sexual sin, unlike other forms of sin, is a sin against one’s own body.

Paul highlighted how the union be-

tween a husband and wife in marriage mirrors the union that believers experience with Christ. He also contrasted this sacred union with the perverted union that exists within sexual immorality.

Paul implored the Corinthians to flee sexual immorality and remember that they are not their own but “bought at a price” (1 Cor. 6:20).

As all believers understand, temptations do not cease upon conversion. Even though, through Christ, believers are not slaves to sin, we will all still struggle with sin until Christ returns or calls us home.

What Paul was trying to communicate to the Corinthians is that the freedom that exists in Christ is not the freedom to explore our own will to the utmost extent, it is the freedom that comes by becoming a different kind of slave, a slave to Christ instead of to sin.

Freedom comes from knowing Christ and glorifying Him for giving us life, dying to save us and forever pursuing a relationship with His people.

If you have ever experienced an injury or ailment that required medical attention, you understand the relationship between a broken person and their healer.

If you are in an accident and experience trauma, your body will not simply repair itself. It requires a physician who knows how to address the damage that your body has undergone and repair it using their knowledge of medicine along with the most recent techniques, technology and medications.

In the same way, human beings are spiritually broken and incapable of repairing the spiritual trauma that we experience through the fall, sinful nature and our rebellion against God. We require the work of Christ – the ultimate Physician – not only to fix our acute problems, but to literally bring us from death to life.

In Exodus 14 and 15 we read how God led the Israelites out of Egypt, how He used Moses to split the Red Sea, allowing His people to travel safely

across its depths and escape Pharaoh’s grasp.

In these passages, the Israelites were called to trust and obey God. Through their trust and obedience, God not only delivered them out of physical slavery, but also spiritual slavery, healing them and bringing them into the fullness of life that only He can provide.

Today, many Christians have the luxury of being able to access the entire canon of Scripture. The story of Moses parting the Red Sea remains as relevant today, and in light of Christ and the New Testament, as it was written hundreds of years before Christ came in the flesh.

We know that, as Christians, we should trust in and follow Christ. But that’s often easier said than done. What we see in this passage is that, as the Israelites experienced when Moses parted the sea, when we place ourselves completely in God’s hands and will, we will be healed and victorious.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Glorifying God

1 CORINTHIANS 6:12-20 (HCSB)

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

Our Healer

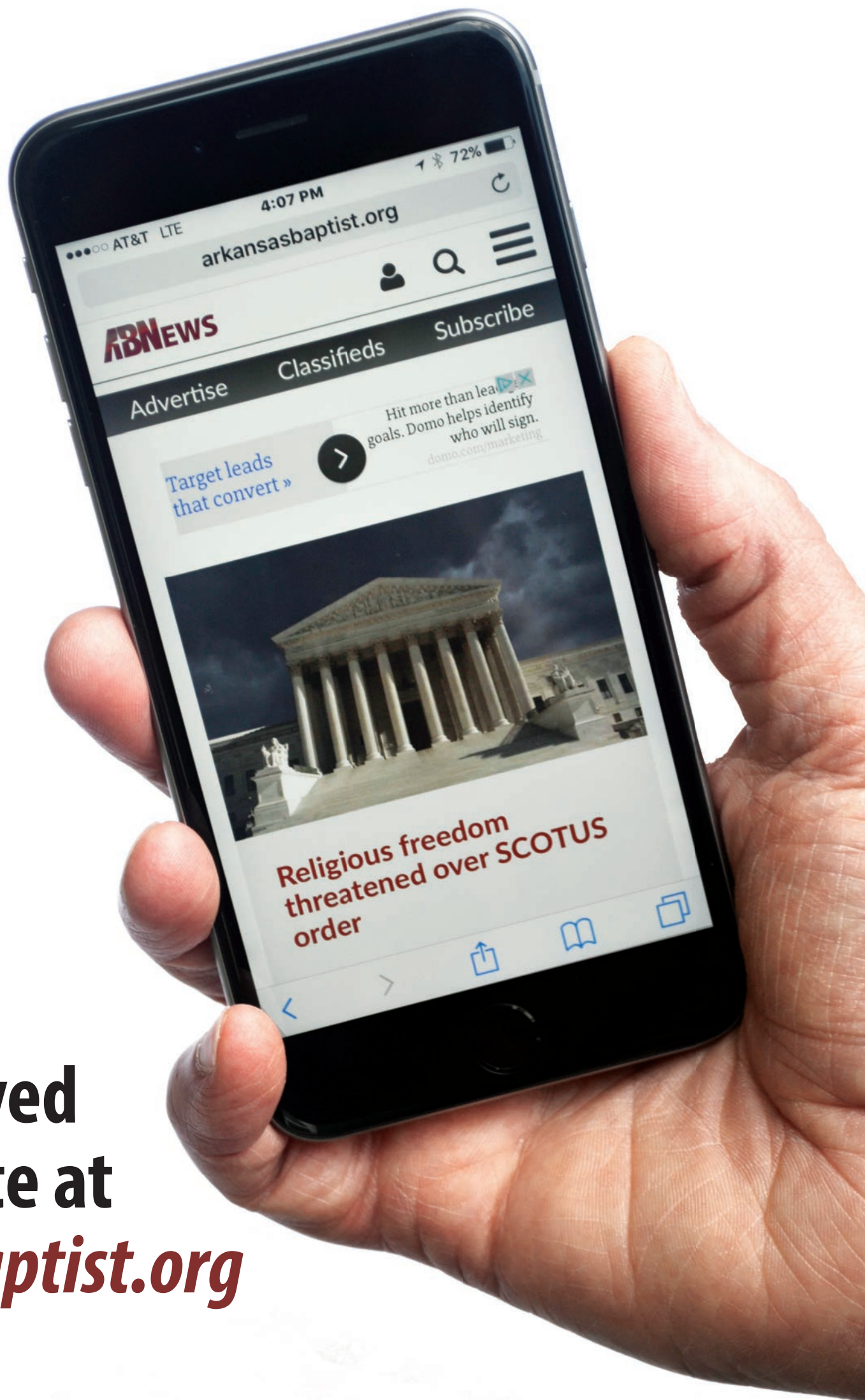
EXODUS 14:29-31; 15:22-27 (HCSB)

Featured commentary writer



Caleb Yarbrough

Caleb Yarbrough is associate editor of the *Arkansas Baptist News*. A 2012 graduate of The University of Georgia (Athens, Ga.), Yarbrough holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in History and a Bachelor of Arts in Journalism degree in Advertising. When he isn’t working on newspaper related tasks, Yarbrough enjoys reading, playing guitar, drinking coffee, eating good food and traveling with his wife, Chelsie. The Yarbroughs reside in Little Rock.



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