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**Photo by Caleb Yarbrough**

## ABN classifieds get results!

**Read them on Page 10.**

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](http://arkansasbaptist.org/ads)**

## Classifieds

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## ABN Digest

Stories of interest  
to Arkansas Baptists

### SBC's GuideStone, ERLC defend housing allowance

WASHINGTON (BP) – Two Southern Baptist entities have urged a federal appeals court to uphold the constitutionality of the ministerial housing allowance.

GuideStone Financial Resources and the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) signed on to a friend-of-the-court brief filed April 26 that asks the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals in Chicago to reverse a lower court decision invalidating the exemption.

In October, federal Judge Barbara Crabb of Wisconsin ruled the allowance is an unconstitutional violation of the First Amendment clause that prohibits a government establishment of religion.

The Seventh Circuit Court, which overruled Crabb's original opinion in 2014, will decide on a section of a 1954 law that permits "ministers of the gospel" to exclude for federal income tax purposes a portion or all of their gross income as a housing allowance. The Internal Revenue Service has interpreted "ministers of the gospel" to include leaders of other religious faiths. The church or church-related employer must designate the amount of the allowance for each minister.

The lawsuit does not affect the part of the law that enables tax-free use of a parsonage or other home owned by a church or other religious body.

GuideStone Financial Resources – the SBC's health and financial benefits entity – is a member of the Church Alliance, which filed the brief in the case. The alliance is a broad coalition of denominational pension programs that cover ministers who qualify for the housing allowance.

For more ABN Digest, go to  
[arkansasbaptist.org/abn-digest](http://arkansasbaptist.org/abn-digest)

# Southwestern trustees to meet following calls for action on Patterson

FORT WORTH, Texas – Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary's Board of Trustees has announced it will hold a special called meeting May 22 after an online petition garnered thousands of signatures of Southern Baptists, mostly women, protesting comments about women made by the seminary's president, Paige Patterson.

According to a statement released by trustee chairman Kevin Ueckert, the meeting will be held at 1:30 p.m. on the seminary's campus in Fort Worth, Texas.

Patterson, 75, became embroiled in controversy this past week after a 2000 audio clip began widely circulating online in which Patterson expressed his views regarding domestic violence and divorce.

"In light of recent events, Dr. Patterson has requested that I convene our full trustee board to meet in official session," the statement said. "As part of a trustee's duty to this institution, and by extension to the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), and by virtue of my authority as Chairman of the Board I am calling a special called meeting of the Board of Trustees, pursuant to the Bylaws."

The online petition signed by thousands of Southern Baptist women (as well as men) – some of them representing Arkansas Baptist churches – asks the board of trustees of Southwestern to take action against Patterson.

In part, the petition reads, "We are concerned Southern Baptist women who affirm the Baptist Faith and Message 2000, including its statements on the roles of men and women in the family and in the church. We urge you to exercise the authority you have been given by the churches of the Southern Baptist Convention

tion and to take a strong stand against unbiblical teaching regarding womanhood, sexuality, and domestic violence."

The petition cites a video that has surfaced from a 2014 speech in which Patterson talks about a 16-year-old girl as being "fine" and quotes a teenager as saying she is "built." Additionally, the letter mentions Patterson's refusal to repudiate comments from a recording made 18 years ago in which he said he would counsel most women in abusive marriages to stay in the marriages and pray for their husbands.

A portion of the petition reads, "We are shocked by the video that has surfaced

biblical meaning of womanhood in that objectification, and the inappropriate nature of his own observations of her body."

The petition was posted sometime over the weekend of May 5-6 after Patterson's comments were widely publicized in various blogs, social media and websites in previous weeks. To read the petition in its entirety, visit [swbtsletter.com](http://swbtsletter.com).

In a recording made in 2000 Patterson recounts a story of a woman whom he counseled about an abusive marriage and how he told her to pray for God to intervene. Later, he said the woman returned with two black eyes. Patterson said the woman told him, "I hope you're happy." Patterson said he responded, "Yes ... I'm very happy," because her husband had heard her prayers and come to church for the first time following the incident.

Matt Chandler, pastor of a Southern Baptist megachurch in Dallas, said in an interview that Patterson should never have made the comments, *The Washington Post* reported.

"Anyone who would say that a woman has to stay in a violent or abusive relationship because it honors God is wrong," the *Post* reported Chandler as saying, who added that he won't preach on passages of the Bible that address wives submitting to their husbands without advising women who are experiencing abuse that "this text is not talking about you."

A variety of current and past Southern Baptist leaders have commented on Patterson's statements about women, including Ed Stetzer, executive director of the Billy Graham Center at Wheaton College; Thom Rainer, president of LifeWay Christian Resources; Russell Moore, president of



Patterson

the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, and Kevin Ezell, president of the North American Mission Board.

Beth Moore, women's speaker, evangelist, author and Bible teacher, posted "A Letter to My Brothers" on her Living Proof Ministries blog May 3, speaking to her male evangelical counterparts, "I'm asking that you would simply have no tolerance for misogyny and dismissiveness toward women in your spheres of influence. I'm asking for your deliberate and clearly conveyed influence toward the imitation of Christ in His attitude and actions toward women."

Complicating matters, Patterson is scheduled to preach the convention sermon at the annual meeting of the SBC to be held in Dallas June 12-13.

Patterson said in a statement issued April 29 that he has advised and helped women to leave abusive husbands, but he stood by his commitment to never recommend divorce. In another statement issued May 1 by Southwestern trustees, Patterson's comments 18 years ago or the question of whether Patterson will deliver the convention's sermon or remain president of the seminary were not addressed.

In an interview with Baptist Press April 30, Patterson told the SBC news service that he doubts "seriously" that a person experiencing physical abuse would be morally obligated to remain in the home with a spouse. He added, however, that "minor noninjurious abuse which happens in so many marriages" might spur a woman to "pray [her husband] through this" rather than leave. Baptist Press said the word "minor" was later added "to reflect Patterson's intent."

This story was compiled from reporting by the Arkansas Baptist News and Baptist Press.



A screenshot of the online petition garnering thousands of signatures of Southern Baptist women protesting comments about women made by Southwestern's president, Paige Patterson.

showing Dr. Paige Patterson objectify a teenage girl and then suggest this as behavior that is biblical. We are further grieved by the dangerous and unwise counsel given by Dr. Patterson to women in abusive situations. His recent remarks of clarification do not repudiate his unwise counsel in the past; nor has he offered explanation or repentance for inappropriate comments regarding a teenage girl, the unbiblical teaching he offered on the



# Banner Hope Center to minister through new county facility

Caleb Yarbrough  
Arkansas Baptist News

**HOPE** – By the time Gov. Asa Hutchinson signed over the deed of the formerly state-owned Migrant Farm Labor Center to Hempstead County May 4 to be used as a juvenile behavioral center, First Baptist Church, Hope, had already been planning how to respond to the new ministry opportunity in town.

The Migrant Farm Labor Center in Hope originally provided seasonal migrant farm workers a place to stay overnight while working on nearby farms. Then in 2013 dwindling federal funding led to part of the facility being repurposed as the Hope Workforce Center, according to the *Hope Star*.

When the migrant center was active, the Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC) operated the Hope Migrant Mission Center on an adjacent property. Like the state-run migrant center, the ABSC's migrant mission center has, until recently, been vacant.

## Need for juvenile center

Hempstead County Sheriff James Singleton said the idea of opening a juvenile detention center in the Hope/southwest Arkansas region came about six years ago, according to the *Texarkana Gazette*.

Today, when juveniles in southwest Arkansas are detained, they are transported to one of six detention facilities, most located in northern Arkansas, producing a financial burden for the towns and counties in southwest part of the state, the *Gazette* reported.

In 2017, the *Gazette* reported, Hempstead County spent \$100,000 in transportation and housing costs associated with sending juveniles to and from these facilities.

During a presentation May 4, Hempstead County Judge Haskell Morse announced that the former migrant center property would be the future home of the Hempstead County Behavioral Center.

"This is a historic day for Hempstead County," said Morse, who estimates the facility will create up to 60 jobs in the area. "But the important thing about this is the juveniles that we have the oppor-

tunity to reach here."

The aim of the new behavioral center, he said, will be to "reach these juveniles before they get to the point where we have to send them ... to a state facility. That's the last thing we really want to do is to send them somewhere to be locked up."

When sent to state facilities, juvenile offenders often learn from other offenders how to be better criminals instead of how to become productive members of society, largely to the expense of their home municipality and/or county, according to Singleton.

"I want to keep the money here in Hempstead County and keep the kids here in Hempstead County and open it up to other counties around us," said Singleton. "The idea behind this is to create an environment out here where we not only treat the juvenile, but where we can treat the family."

Before signing the facility's deed over to the county, Hutchinson shared his approval of Hempstead County's plans for the former migrant center.

"We have six institutions in Arkansas (where) we send juvenile offenders," said Hutchinson. "We'd like to be able to reduce some of that volume of juvenile offenders (who) are incarcerated and institutionalized longer term and put more in community-based services where they are closer to their home, where they get the services that they need and ... I hope that much of it is faith-based."

"This is an example of effective utilization of public assets – something that was under utilized at a state level that can be utilized at the local level for a very good purpose," said Hutchinson.

## Ministry opportunity

As local public officials are making plans for the new behavioral center, First Baptist Church, Hope, is actively planning for its new Banner Hope Center, to minister to juveniles

and their families.

Daniel Bramlett, pastor of First Baptist Church, Hope, recently met with Singleton, and the two discussed each other's respective goals for the juvenile center and how the county and church might work together to accomplish the goals.

"I felt real good about [the discussion], and he felt real good about it. They [First Baptist] have skin in the game," said Singleton.

"Pastor Bramlett came to us ... with the idea that First Baptist Church had to do some work here next to the facility and try to help this operation," said Morse. "A faith-based operation is, as most of us believe, the best way to go in a lot of things."

First Baptist is currently in the process of acquiring the former Hope Migrant Mission Center from the ABSC and is exploring options for how it can partner with the future Hempstead County Behavioral Center.

"I am a Hope resident by birth," said Bramlett. "It is such a joy for me to be here



Arkansas Gov. Asa Hutchinson and Hempstead County Sheriff James Singleton hold the deed of the formerly state-owned migrant center in Hope. Hutchinson signed the property over to Hempstead County May 4. From left, are: Daniel Bramlett, pastor of First Baptist Church, Hope; Hutchinson; Singleton; Haskell Morse, Hempstead County judge; and Daryl Bassett, director of the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services. Below, First Baptist Church, Hope, has renamed the former Hope Migrant Mission Center, Banner Hope Center. *Photos by Caleb Yarbrough*

for the better in the cultural landscape of Hope and Hempstead County."

While Hope and its surrounding communities have seen "positive changes" in recent years, Bramlett said, they still have "good distance yet to go."

Acknowledging "so many good things in our business district, in our educational system and in our churches," Bramlett added, "The fact is many of our families are falling apart. Many of our neighborhoods are crumbling. Relationships between our social and racial and economic demographics are strained at best."

"We at Banner Hope Center are dedicated to helping our residents make that change," said Bramlett.

The pastor said the challenges that Hope and surrounding areas face are primarily spiritual, not physical. The only way to make the necessary change is to "take an offensive position, trusting that our God is bigger and stronger than the enemy we are fighting," he said.

Of the Banner Hope Center, Bramlett said, "We are a truth-proclaiming organization."

"The Banner Hope Center will work in conjunction with the county in every way possible. We will serve as an open

door to families who want to seek restoration. We will serve as a safe haven for both juveniles who want and/or need a path out of the darkness surrounding them, and the parents who bring them in," he said.

Bramlett added that the goal of the Banner Hope Center is to "be a positive source of trust and hope and change for the broken and hurting members of Hope and Hempstead County."

Val Knight, member and discipleship coordinator at First Baptist, has been active in the development of the Banner Hope Center. While early in the process of renovating the facility, he said that the center could begin pilot projects as soon as this summer.

While First Baptist will own and operate the center, Knight said that the church hopes to find other local churches to partner with the ministry.

"That's an opportunity for us to work together in the community to be able to provide for the needs of those here," said Knight. "We've got good preachers and teachers here in the community who can step up into that to nurture and admonish young people in the way of the Lord. Many hands make light work."

As the Banner Hope Center is established, Knight calls on individuals or churches to be "partnering in prayer" for this new ministry opportunity.

For more information visit [fbchope.org](http://fbchope.org).

Contact Caleb Yarbrough at [caleb@arkansasbaptist.org](mailto:caleb@arkansasbaptist.org).



and be part of this process – just to see what God is doing and the way He's at work."

First Baptist is renovating the former migrant mission center and has renamed it the Banner Hope Center, he said.

The word, "banner," is being used, he explained, in reference to the Hebrews declaring in Exodus 17:15, "The Lord is our banner." The word, "hope," is being used, he said, "because this is the reward we are offering."

"Hope needs hope. We need something tangible that we can put our hands ... and minds around, that is exciting and right and good," said Bramlett. "We are excited about being a part of change



# 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)

## The SBC family has a lot to talk about in Dallas

If the past few months are any indication, messengers and guests will have a lot to consider and discuss at the upcoming annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) June 12-13 in Dallas.

Not all will be formal business brought to the floor of the convention, but as usual there will be numerous resolutions and hall-talk to fill in the blanks.

The latest and most visible shake-up involves Paige Patterson, a stalwart of the conservative resurgence, who is being criticized for comments he made about spousal abuse nearly two decades ago, along with more recent comments about a young woman. Patterson, president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, is scheduled to preach the convention sermon and give the Evangelism Task Force report. (Read related story, page 2).

What was first considered the biggest wrinkle at this year's annual meeting was the

election of SBC president, with North Carolina pastor J.D. Greear, representing a new generational shift, versus Ken Hemphill, an administrator at North Greenville University in South Carolina and a former president of Southwestern Seminary, who is said to represent the "old guard" SBC, vying for the position.

Frank Page's sudden resignation as president and CEO of the SBC Executive Committee due to a "personal failing" leaves a vacancy in one of the top leadership roles in the convention, as does the pending exit of David Platt, president of the International Mission Board (IMB), who has asked IMB trustees to seek his replacement.

No sooner was the SBC Committee on Committees report announced than it was criticized as being too Anglo – and not a true representation of the growth of multi-ethnic

congregations in the convention.

Russell Moore, president of the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, continues to be criticized by conservatives for positions taken to support religious

liberty, racial reconciliation and other issues.

What might seem to some like a shake-up of massive proportions in the SBC, in actuality, has been a part of its history for many years. The relative calm the convention has experienced in the aftermath of the conservative resurgence is more of an anomaly.

Politics and personalities

aside, what I enjoy most about attending the annual meeting is seeing how the collective efforts of Southern Baptists seek to evangelize and make a difference through the gospel.

Having served at two different national entities and state conventions, I see folks at the annual meeting that I don't see during the year, and it's always great to catch up and find out what God has been doing in their lives and ministries.

While SBC messengers are there to conduct the business of the convention, I find the times of praise and worship to always be rich as Southern Baptists from across the U.S. and the globe join their

voices together.

It's a joy to see our churches of every conceivable flavor and ethnic make-up, and our Baptist colleges and seminaries, agencies, state conventions and associations in action – using resources Southern Baptists have entrusted to them to make a difference in reaching the world for Jesus Christ.

If you are physically and financially able, don't miss attending the meeting in Dallas for a day or two and take in the meeting and the sights. It's one of the closest annual meetings to be held to Arkansas the past few years.

Tim Yarbrough is editor/executive director of the Arkansas Baptist News.



### Pressing On

Tim Yarbrough

Phil. 3:14

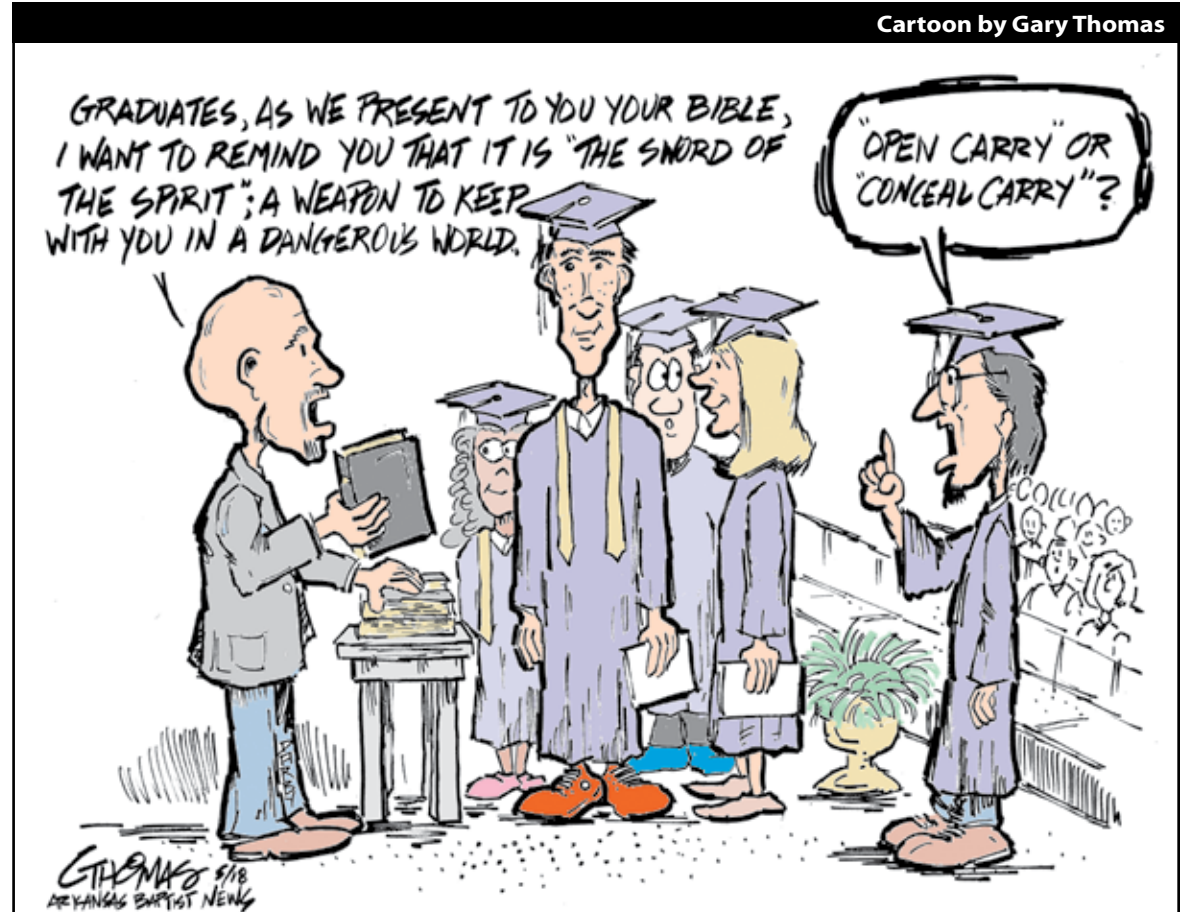
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The Arkansas Baptist News (ABN) exists to assist Kingdom work by informing, inspiring and involving Arkansas Baptists through meeting needs of people, spreading the gospel, making disciples and growing God's work in Arkansas and beyond.

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.

Cartoon by Gary Thomas



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## What is the best way to read the Bible?

**B**ecause there are hundreds of ways to read the Bible, it would be difficult to determine one best way. Instead, here is an approach to create a consistent habit of studying the Bible.

**First, try to read the Bible regularly.** Select a small portion of Scripture to read each day. A devotion guide, like Open Windows or Our Daily Bread, will provide incentive to read Scripture daily and to learn biblical truth.

**Second, read the Bible methodically.** By studying sections or passages of Scripture, readers understand the continuity of the Bible. Whether it is a parable from the gospels, a letter from the Apostle Paul, a psalm or a prophetic oracle, scriptural units help readers focus more on biblical genre and setting.



### Baptists Ask

Ken Gore

**Third, read the Bible holistically.** When it is no longer sufficient to study small sections of Scripture, readers will feel more comfortable studying entire books of the Bible. By doing this, they will learn about the author, the themes of the book and its historical context.

**Fourth, read the Bible in its entirety.** Readers may want to challenge themselves by reading the Bible in a year. By starting with Genesis and concluding with Revelation, readers will gain a better understanding of the Bible's message and how the Old and New Testaments work together.

**Above all, read the Bible in community.** The Bible was never meant to be read alone. Instead, it should be read often in a group setting in order to discuss the Bible with other believers. Such a study will foster spiritual growth.

In Acts 8, Philip came upon an Ethiopian eunuch, who was reading the scroll of Isaiah. When Philip asked him if he understood it, the eunuch responded, "How can I ... unless someone explains it to me?" (Acts 8:31, NIV). They studied the Bible together, and the eunuch became a baptized believer.

The best way to read the Bible is to start small but want more. Through gradual and consistent study, alone and in a group, believers will grow in their Christian faith, which will produce a craving that will last a lifetime.

Ken Gore is professor of biblical studies at Dallas Baptist University. Send your questions to [tim@arkansasbaptist.org](mailto:tim@arkansasbaptist.org).

## Letter to the Editor

### 'Big Guy' quote inappropriate

The April 19 *Arkansas Baptist News* article about what God is doing in the Arkansas Delta was informative and inspirational. And, we certainly need to hear more about God's movement in Arkansas as well as other places. The work of Pastor Jarvis Smith in forming the Delta Institute in the Helena-West Helena area is certainly to be commended and is obviously being blessed by God.

However, my only concern in the article is the quote by Pastor Smith where he said, "That's what I call approval from the Big Guy." That one quote could have been left out. I am sure that no disrespect was intended. But, it is a poor

use of terminology in speaking of our Lord as "the Big Guy." I would respectfully suggest that such terminology not be put in print. God should be called by His proper name and not referred to by using a slang terminology that too often is used by secular society.

The last thing I want to do is be critical of Pastor Smith. Thank God for the wonderful work he is doing, and we should pray for God to continue to bless him and that work. I just needed to express a word of caution about how we refer to our Lord and urge the *Arkansas Baptist News* to carefully edit the use of such terminology.

Larry Kindrick  
Hardy

# A special place of God's presence

**W**hy did they call Him Jesus of Nazareth?" a rabbi asked Walker Moore, president of Awe Star Ministries. "He wasn't born in Nazareth. He had no ministry there. The people rejected Him. Why not Jesus of Bethlehem, where He was born? Or Jesus of Jerusalem, where He died?"

With Moore having no good answer, the rabbi directed Moore's attention to a grove of eight olive trees. "How many trees to do you see?" questioned the rabbi. "Eight," replied Walker. "Wrong. Count again," said the rabbi.

After a half hour of the same dialogue, Moore said, "I give up. There's something you see that I don't." The rabbi explained that the eight trees were actually one organism. The shoots go out from the main tree and create new ones. They appear to be standing free, but they are connected to the parent tree.



### Camp Siloam

Jason Wilkie

If you pull up one, you pull up the whole tree.

"A new shoot of the tree is called a Nazareth," explained the rabbi. The title Jesus of Nazareth is a declaration that He is of the Father, that Jesus is God.

Isn't that cool? I love the tree metaphors in Scripture because I love trees. I mean I really love them. I enjoy planting trees and watching them grow. I think of how creative God is when I watch them bloom in the spring and then turn colors in the fall. I love that trees play such an important role in God's narrative.

For instance, Jesus hung on a tree. King David wrote that we shall be like trees planted by water. I like to imagine what the tree of life looked like in the Garden of Eden. I picture it like a massive live oak. It's fun to think about what the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was like. Of all the trees He created, I think the cedar is God's favorite tree. He lined His own



residence with the aromatic wood of the cedars of Lebanon. Can you imagine how that room smelled?

At Camp Siloam we are working to infuse more of God's creation into camp. We have named the shelters after trees. Our dining hall architect, Steve Elliott of Lewis Architects and Engineers in Little Rock, trimmed the dining hall in cedar, like the temple. So as a subtle nod to the Father, we are naming the new dining hall Cedar Hall. It is my hope that it is a special place of God's presence, just like His house.

Jason Wilkie is executive director of Camp Siloam in Siloam Springs.

## Gifts anyone can afford

**A**ccording to Scripture, Christians should contribute of their means cheerfully, regularly, systematically, proportionately and liberally for the advancement of the gospel.

Typically, we limit our contributions to only the cash we have available. However,

Americans hold most of their wealth in non-cash assets such as equities, real estate or life insurance. When we view all our assets as available for deployment, we can advance the gospel on a much larger scale. Considering this, following are some ways to give that anyone can afford:

**Giving from your estate.** An individual's assets will pass to their beneficiaries or the next generation in one way or another. Generally, your estate can transfer according to your intent, established in a last will and testament or revocable trust. In a

will or trust, you can leave a specific distribution to your church or favorite ministry as a percentage or specific dollar amount. As a reminder, the Foundation can provide drafts or the necessary language to accomplish your charitable intent.

**Giving through use of beneficiary designations.** Naming a church or your favorite ministry as the beneficiary of a retirement plan,

financial account or annuity is an easy way to help further the gospel while you continue to benefit from these assets during your lifetime. For example, you can designate 10 percent, or the first \$5,000 from your checking account, to your church or favorite ministry by filling out the necessary forms with your bank.

**Giving from life insurance policies.** You can donate a life insurance policy to a church or your favorite ministry and take an immediate tax deduc-

tion. Additionally, you can name a charitable entity as beneficiary of a policy in the same ways discussed above.

**Giving from real estate.** If you own real estate and wish to remain living there or using it, you can transfer the real estate to your church or favorite ministry while retaining the right to use the real estate during your lifetime. You also enjoy the added benefit of an income tax deduction. You can also transfer real estate at death through a beneficiary deed.

For more information about the Foundation and its services call 501-376-4791.

*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



# Prayers, unity highlight Day of Prayer event at U.S. Capitol

WASHINGTON – Prayer is a “gift that the Lord has given us,” said Ronnie Floyd, president of the National Day of Prayer, at the National Religious Broadcasters’ First Amendment Lunch in Washington May 3.

“Today, all over this country, already thousands have gathered in all kinds of ways, in all kinds of places, on the National Day of Prayer,” said Floyd, who is also senior pastor of Cross Church in northwest Arkansas and immediate past president of the Southern Baptist Convention.

“What an opportunity it is that on this day we’re able to gather in this great city, forwarding the importance of prayer in America,” he said.

The theme for the 2018 National Day of Prayer was “Unity,” Floyd said, emphasizing its importance in America and how Ephesians 4:3 – the verse upon which the theme was based – calls on believers to make “every effort to keep

the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.”

“Unity is supernatural and only happens through the power of God,” Floyd said. “And because we believe in the power of prayer that beseeches the heart of a merciful God who is sovereign over all affairs, I’m thankful today that when I pray, I have the confidence that God is able.”

Floyd concluded his remarks by reminding Christian leaders that “a divided church cannot call a divided nation to unity.”

“We as the church of Jesus Christ need to model what true Christian unity is just as Jesus prayed for us to experience that together in John 17,” Floyd said before leading the audience in a time of prayer.

Later that evening, Floyd led in a National Day of Prayer observance in the U.S. Capitol. During the two-hour observance, Floyd directed those gathered into times of prayer, first for a full commitment to

unity. He invited the audience to gather in groups of four to six people to pray at intervals, sometimes requesting they kneel on the floor if possible.

Throughout the hall, participants offered prayers of repentance at one juncture and requests for God’s mercy and forgiveness of sin at another. Individuals led in prayers for the three branches of the federal government, as well as the U.S. military. Prayers were also offered by Native American, Hispanic, Anglo, African American and Asian leaders in the church.

H.B. Charles Jr. – president of the 2018 SBC Pastors’ Conference and pastor-teacher of Shiloh Metropolitan Baptist Church in Jacksonville, Fla. – told the audience dependence on God is “the essential key to believing prayer.”

“Prayer will not work without a heart of dependence upon God,” he said in remarks based on the story of King Uzziah in 2 Chronicles 26.



A group of individuals pray together during a National Day of Prayer event held at Immanuel Baptist Church, Little Rock, May 3. Photo by Caleb Yarbrough

“Prayer is our advertisement of our dependence upon God. As we confess our weakness, we draw closer to God.

“When we acknowledge our weakness, our neediness and our helplessness without God, it not only draws us closer to God,” Charles said. “It also draws us closer to one another.”

Samuel Rodriguez, president of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference, said the call to unity “requires repentance, humility.”

“Now is the time to bring an end to abortion, racism, intolerance, hatred and bigotry,” Rodriguez said.

“And now is the time to remember that while we’re waiting for Jesus to come down,

Jesus is waiting for His church to stand up.”

The name of Jesus Christ “unites us,” Rodriguez told participants. “[W]e need that name to be lovingly lifted up and proclaimed. That name, believe it or not, can save this nation.

“[L]et us repent; let us humble ourselves.”

Donna Gaines, a women’s ministry leader and wife of SBC President Steve Gaines, offered a prayer of repentance.

“Father, we are ashamed and embarrassed to lift our faces to You our God for our iniquities have risen above our heads and our guilt has grown to the heavens,” she prayed. “We desperately need You.”

## ‘Creative’ spring break missions

Lisa Falknor  
Special to the ABN

WHEN CHRISTIAN college students go on spring break mission trips, it usually means they drive to a location to minister at a local church. This past March, college ministers across Arkansas offered their students a different kind of spring break.

University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, sophomore Julia DenHerder went to Puerto Rico with her Baptist College Minister Cole Penick and five other students from four Arkansas universities.

“Why are you doing disaster relief in Puerto Rico?” my friends asked me before the trip,” DenHerder said. “Wasn’t that hurricane awhile ago?”

Though the hurricane was six months prior, DenHerder called the need “eye-opening.”

Her team served 2,592 meals and worked 38 hours per team member for a total of 266 hours.

“Arkansas (Baptist) disaster relief helped us significantly cover the cost,” said Penick.

The statewide Baptist Collegiate Ministry (BCM), part of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention’s college and young leaders team, and the North American Mission Board Send Relief Project made the trip possible too, he said.

The group shared the gospel 31 times, distributed 12 Bibles and 30 evangelistic tracts and made 34 contacts for the local Baptist church – Metro Vineyard in San Juan.

“This was not Habitat for Humanity, but a gospel mission,” Penick said.

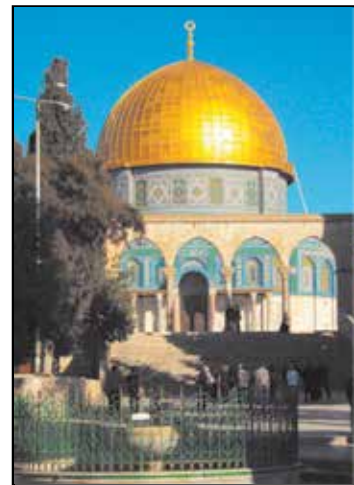
During their spring break, 13 students and two staff members from Ouachita Baptist University partnered with a refugee ministry based in Anaheim, Calif., called Voice of the Refugees.

Students distributed food and helped people from countries like Iraq, Egypt and Syria with their English. “They

come as refugees because their lives are in danger, they’ve lost their homes or (they’re facing) political and religious persecution, both Christians and Muslims,” said Ouachita Baptist Campus Minister James Taylor.

The team met people from different backgrounds they might not get to meet in Arkansas, said Taylor.

See **MISSIONS** page 9



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# Ark. collegiate ministers get 'fresh take' at summit

HENDERSONVILLE, Tenn. (BP) – A triennial gathering involving hundreds of collegiate ministry workers “inspires us to go back to our campus with new ideas and a fresh take on things,” said Arkansas campus minister Dawn Reed.

That's why she returned to LifeWay Christian Resources' Collegiate Summit, hosted May 2-4 by First Baptist Church in Hendersonville, Tenn.

Collegiate Summit featured plenary addresses, networking opportunities and breakout sessions on issues facing college ministers. Among the conference's sponsors were the International Mission Board, the North American Mission

Board's Send Relief, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and Samaritan's Purse.

This year's summit also included an emphasis on the Forgotten 50 initiative, an effort to establish an orthodox, Protestant ministry presence on the 50 college campuses in North America with the least access to the gospel – all in Canada. In a May 3 plenary session, attendees were asked to commit to pray for at least one of those campuses.

The gathering “reenergizes our passion for our students,” said Reed, Baptist Collegiate Ministry director at Lyon College in Batesville.

LifeWay collegiate ministry specialist Bill Noe said “college ministry leaders love” Collegiate Summit “because it's great training for how to engage students with the gospel, but it's also great networking. It gives them an opportunity to connect with others on the front lines of doing ministry on campus.”

Also at the summit, it was announced that retired Arkansas collegiate minister Arliss Dickerson would be honored by New Orleans Baptist Theo-



LifeWay Christian Resources' Collegiate Summit was hosted May 2-4 by First Baptist Church in Hendersonville, Tenn.

logical Seminary, which is raising \$2 million to fund the Arliss Dickerson chair of discipleship and collegiate ministry at the seminary.

Ethicist Russell Moore, one of four plenary session speakers, said in a May 3 address that learning to define success and glory in countercultural ways is among the primary challenges in collegiate ministry.

“If we have this idea that

glory means visible success and prosperity in the moment, we are not going to have ministries that understand the cross,” said Moore, president of the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission. Faithfulness in proclaiming “the Word of the Lord is worth it even if it seems that no one receives it.”

Believers – including those in collegiate ministry – must seek “a different kind of suc-

cess” and “a different kind of belonging” than the world seeks, Moore said.

For Weaver McCracken, retired state collegiate ministry director for the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, Collegiate Summit offers a taste of such connectedness.

“This is a key time to collaborate, to refresh and to catch up with others who are doing the same type of thing you're doing,” said McCracken.



## STAFF WANTED

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ARKANSAS BAPTIST  
CHILDREN'S HOMES &  
FAMILY MINISTRIES

## SBC Dallas travel help available to pastors

NEW ORLEANS (BP) – Pastors of smaller membership churches are eligible for help with expenses to attend the Southern Baptist Convention's (SBC) Annual Meeting in Dallas by applying through the Caskey Center for Church Excellence at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary (NOBTS).

Surplus funds from last year's Pastors' Conference costs were placed in reserve by the conference's officers and designated for convention travel scholarships for smaller membership pastors, with NOBTS' Caskey Center designated to distribute the funds.

Scholarships in the amount of \$1,000 each will be awarded to qualified applicants on a first-come, first-served basis.

Funds must be used for flight, hotel, mileage, rental car, meals, books and resources or other convention-related expenses.

If awarded, the \$1,000 check will be mailed directly to the church with a letter designating the funds for the pastor's convention expenses.

Pastors of congregations with fewer than 150 in average attendance and whose churches are unable or unwilling to fund convention expenses may apply for scholarship as-

sistance.

Applicants will be asked a series of questions to determine eligibility. Personal contact information as well as church contact information will be required.

By applying, applicants agree to use the funds to attend all four SBC Pastors' Conference sessions June 10-11 as well as all of the annual meeting sessions June 12-13.

Last year, 61 scholarships of \$1,000 were provided from funding generated by the Pastors' Conference, with \$24,000 from its budget overage set aside for scholarships this year.

“The Southern Baptist Convention has always been comprised primarily of smaller membership churches,” said Jeffrey C. Farmer, associate director of the Caskey Center.

“These faithful Christ-followers serve at the crossroads of America, proclaiming the gospel and loving their neighbors. We are honored to be able to provide this resource so that many who have never attended the Pastors' Conference and convention can participate in our denomination's annual meeting.”

To apply or for information, go to nobts.news/conference-scholarship.



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**10 SALVATIONS REPORTED** — Ten salvations were reported as a result of the work of medical/dental clinics and through other mission sites across Sherwood Saturday, May 5, according to Breck Freeman, assistant director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention missions team. During the day, 47 patients were seen, with 66 teeth extracted. "It was a great day across Arkansas today," said Freeman. "God is changing lives across our state, nation and world."



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**See a preview of the upcoming  
SBC Annual Meeting in Dallas in  
the May 31 edition of the ABN.**





# MISSIONS

continued from page 6

“Students come back understanding how difficult it is for refugees to lose their homes. They have a face to put with it,” he said.

Michael Clayton, campus minister at National Park College, took seven of his students and three students from Northwest Arkansas Commu-

nity College on an educational apologetics experience in Kentucky.

“They’re hearing the ‘Why do you believe Christianity?’ questions earlier through public schools or through friends,” said Clayton. “The last thing students want to give is an ‘I don’t know’ answer.”

Apologetics leader Chris Kohlman taught students how to defend their faith. In addition, the group visited the Ark Encounter and Creation Museum in Williamstown, Ky.

“One of our students has a really good friend who is an atheist,” said Clayton. “He said he wanted to be better prepared when his friend asks questions about his Christian faith.”

Every other spring break trip he’s taken with students were based around mission trips, said Josh Mauldin, college pastor at First Baptist Church, Fayetteville. This year, University of Arkansas sophomore Jeffery Kutter said Mauldin “wanted to give us a

different experience: to learn a lot and have fun.”

Mauldin took 11 from his church and five from the BCM at the University of Arkansas in Fort Smith to Louisville, Ky. The team visited the Louisville Slugger Museum and Factory, the Creation Museum and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Mauldin said they visited the seminary because he wanted students like Kutter to know where their (Southern Baptist) Cooperative Program

dollars go, where their Southern Baptist pastors learn and how ministers train.

Mauldin said this spring break worked for his group. “We wanted to grow in an understanding of God’s world and grow in relationship with others,” he said. “We hit both goals.”

*Lisa Falknor is a writer for the college and young leaders team of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention and is the northwest correspondent for the Arkansas Baptist News.*

## Ministry Opportunity



ARKANSAS BAPTIST HOME FOR CHILDREN

**Campus Director:**  
Baptist Home for Children,  
Monticello.

Responsible for oversight of a 48-bed residential facility in Monticello, Ark. This ministry provides residential care for boys and girls, ages 5 through high school, in six family homes. A master's degree in a human services field is preferred.

Contact: David Perry at (501) 376-4791 ext. 5167 or [dperry@abchomes.org](mailto:dperry@abchomes.org).



From left: Tyler King, Hayden Beckwith and Cole Penick put up a beam on a house while on a disaster relief spring break mission trip to Puerto Rico.

## Leadership Profile for 2018 ABSC Nominating Committee

Members of the Nominating Committee for the 2016 Arkansas Baptist State Convention invite Arkansas Baptists to submit names of persons to that committee to consider when they bring the convention nominations for state committees and boards. This recommendation will not insure nomination, but the committee will consider each recommendation. The committee will not contact any person recommended until they approve the nominations. The Nominating Committee will hold its first meeting in June and needs all recommendations no later than June 1. Members of the committee are: Brian Whitney, chairman; Erby Burgess, Dave Hughey, Chris Johnson, Ralph Mashburn, Tad Rogers, Phillip Smith, Mac Stroud and Paul White.

### June 1 is the deadline for recommendations.

PLEASE PRINT

Nominee \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Minister ☐ Layperson    Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Member of what church? \_\_\_\_\_

Association \_\_\_\_\_

Current leadership responsibilities

Professional \_\_\_\_\_

Civic \_\_\_\_\_

Church \_\_\_\_\_

Association \_\_\_\_\_

State or SBC Boards \_\_\_\_\_

Past leadership experience (within last five years)

State or SBC Boards \_\_\_\_\_

Association \_\_\_\_\_

Local Church \_\_\_\_\_

MAIL THIS FORM TO: Connie McCall, c/o Executive Director's Office,  
10 Remington Drive, Little Rock, AR 72204  
or fax to 501-410-1603.

Personal

This person's greatest contributions, based on his or her past record, knowledge and experience, should be in the area of: \_\_\_\_\_

Is this person currently active in a local church? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Is this person able to be away from family and work for at least one or two days, three times a year? ☐ Yes ☐ No

On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rank this person's understanding of and commitment to the Cooperative Program? (Circle) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (10 being the highest rating)

Check the board or committee on which you believe this person could best serve.

Board of Trustees

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- ☐ Arkansas Baptist Foundation
- ☐ Arkansas Baptist News
- ☐ Baptist Memorial Health Care System, Inc., Memphis, Tenn.
- ☐ Camp Siloam
- ☐ Executive Board of the ABSC
- ☐ Ouachita Baptist University
- ☐ Williams Baptist University

Committees

- ☐ Constitution and Bylaws Committee
- ☐ Convention Program Committee

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_  
(Name of person making recommendation)

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_



## Obituaries

Bobby "Bob" L. Wright, 86, of Harrison, died Tuesday, March 20.



He was a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

Wright served churches in Arkansas, Texas and Kansas. He was pastor of First Baptist Church, Harrison, from 1965-73, and Markham Street Baptist Church, Little Rock, from 1976-81; and associate pastor of Second Baptist Church, Little Rock, from 1973-76.

Wright was preceded in death by two brothers and five sisters. He is survived by his

## Richter to serve as state historian

LITTLE ROCK – Wendy Richter, Ouachita Baptist University (OBU) professor and archivist since 2013, has been named state historian and director of the Arkansas State Archives (ASA).

Stacy Hurst, director of the Department of Arkansas Heritage (DAH), announced Richter's hiring. The ASA is a division of DAH.

Richter previously served as director of the state archives, when it was known as the Arkansas History Commission,

wife of 55 years, Billie Ruth (Garrison) Wright, a son, a daughter, four grandchildren and a sister.

from 2005-12. She has more than 35 years of experience in archival records and research, specifically in Arkansas history. She will begin her new duties on May 14.

"The work of the Arkansas State Archives is very important, and I look forward to Dr. Richter's leadership of the organization and its mission of maintaining the historical records of our state," said Gov. Asa Hutchinson. "Her understanding of and scholarship in Arkansas history are an extraordinary gift to our state."

Richter has a master's degree in public history from the University of Arkansas at



Richter



**FOR THE CHURCH** – Jason Allen, president of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (MBTS), moderates a panel discussion during the seminary's For the Church Regional Micro-Conference held May 8 at Immanuel Baptist Church in Little Rock. From left, are: Allen; Bill Elliff, pastor of The Summit Church in central Arkansas; Steven Smith, pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church, Little Rock; Robert Lewis, former pastor of Fellowship Bible Church, Little Rock; Tim Lundy, pastor of Christ Community Church, Little Rock, and Owen Strachan, MBTS professor. Photo by Doug Hibbard

Little Rock, and she has both a master's degree and a doctorate degree in heritage studies from Arkansas State University. Richter and her staff at OBU recently earned national honors with the Baptist History and Heritage Society's

2017 Davis C. Wooley Award for Outstanding Achievement in Assessing and Preserving Baptist History. Richter is an expert in the history of the upper Ouachita River Valley and Clark, Hot Spring and Garland counties.

## Classifieds

## PASTOR

New Hope Baptist Church of Muskogee, OK, is prayerfully seeking a **pastor**. Please email resumes to Pastor Search Committee at newpastorhbc@gmail.com.

Altus First Baptist Church, Altus, AR, is seeking a **bi-vocational pastor**. Send resume to: 926 Carbon Plant Rd., Altus, AR 72821, or call 479-213-1239.

Military Road SBC seeking **bi-vocational pastor**. Send resume to: PO Box 145, Jacksonville, AR 72078.

Seeking **full-time pastor**. Send resume to Franklin Baptist Church, P.O. Box 12, Franklin, AR 72536. Call 1-870-404-3912.

First Baptist Church, Bells, TN, is prayerfully seeking a **full-time pastor**. A letter of interest, resume, references and statement of faith should be sent to Pastor Search Team, c/o Robert Gaines, 133 Robin Rd., Bells, TN 38006 or fbcbellssc@gmail.com.

Ard Community Bapt. Church is seeking a **f/t bi-vocational pastor**. Resumes and references to Pulpit Committee, ACBC, 13320 Ard Road, Dardanelle, AR, 72834.

North Main Baptist SBC Church seeking **interim pastor**. Send resumes to jvance1@windstream.net or 707 North Main, Sheridan, AR, 72150.

First Baptist Church of Lepanto, Arkansas, is seeking candidates for a **full-time senior pastor**. Preferred candidate will be an experienced pastor with a seminary degree that aligns with Southern Baptist theology and the inerrancy of Scripture. He will provide leadership, counseling and promote community outreach. Resumes and references should be sent to Tim Benton at tnbenton@eritter.net.

First Baptist Church, Blue Eye, AR, traditional So. Baptist Church, is seeking a **full-time pastor**. Send resumes to FBC, PO Box 126, Blue Eye,

MO, 65611, or call 870-654-6473.

Bi-vocational Pastor/Mary's Chapel Baptist Church, Blytheville, AR. Seeking a **bi-vocational pastor** for a small country church. Please email resume to juanitagreen69@icloud.com.

Central Baptist Church, Marshall, Texas, seeking **pastor** candidates. Send resumes to robinette@cbcmarshall.org. Small, downtown congregation, affiliated with SBC and BGCT, supporting several local ministries, seeking to meet needs and share the gospel with surrounding community.

First Baptist Church of Hayti, Missouri, is prayerfully seeking a **full-time/bi-vocational pastor** who is Bible grounded and people oriented for blended worship services. Degree from a Southern Baptist seminary is preferred. Email resumes to: FBCHayti@gmail.com.

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

Williams Baptist University in Walnut Ridge, Ark., seeks a **tenure-track assistant professor of art**. Candidate must have master's degree in art or an MFA. Preference given to candidates who can teach digital art and have an art education background. Must be an active follower of Jesus Christ and committed to WBU's spiritual and academic mission. Send: 1) current academic vita; 2) statement of teaching philosophy; 3) statement of faith; 4) three reference letters to hr@wbcoll.edu.

Osage River Baptist Association of Butler, MO, is prayerfully accepting resumes for the position of **director of missions**. The candidate must have a minimum of 6 years of ministry experience, a masters preferred, be ordained, and be in agreement with the Baptist Faith and Message 2000. Send resumes by May 29 to ORBA, PO Box 140, Butler, MO or email osage.river@hotmail.com.

FBC, Walnut Ridge, is searching for a **full-time children's minister** to oversee ministry to children and families K-6th Grade. Must provide vision for reaching the community and teaching the church. Now accepting resumes at kidmin@fbcwalnutridge.org.

First Baptist Church of Bay is seeking a **full-time worship leader/minister to students**. Our church is a growing church in a growing community (located just outside of Jonesboro, average attendance 200+). Submit resume to fbcbay@suddenlink.net or by mail to FBC, PO Box 190, Bay AR 72411. Visit www.bayfbc.org for more info.

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.

First Baptist Marion, searching for a **full-time children's minister** to oversee birth-5th grade. Will lead volunteers, disciple children and families, and serve in the Marion community. Send resumes to resumes@firstmarion.org by May 31.

Kern Heights Baptist Church in DeQueen, AR, is seeking **full-time youth minister**. Experience leading worship a plus. Send resumes to khbc@windstream.net.

First Baptist, Harrisburg, is looking for a **part-time music director** to lead blended services on Sundays. Contact Bro. Kelly Jones at kellyjones@harrisburgfbc.com.

FBC of Hardy, AR, seeking **full-time associate pastor to young adult families**. Send resume or inquiries to Search Committee, P.O. Box 27, Hardy, AR 72542 or to office@fbc-hardy.com.

Cocklebur Baptist, Ward, AR, is prayerfully seeking **part-time youth leader**. Accepting resumes through June 15, 2018. Email resumes to cbc4138@gmail.com, or mail to Attn: Youth Search Committee, 4138 Cocklebur Road, Ward, Arkansas 72176.

FBC Heber is seeking a **full-time student minister**. Send resume to phyllis@fbcheber.org.

FBC Prescott is seeking an energetic **part-time music/choir director**. Please send resume to: FBC Prescott Personnel Committee, PO Box 447, Prescott, AR 71857.

First Baptist Church, Henderson, Texas, **full-time position for children's minister**, to minister to children and young families. Send resumes to David Higgs, 207 W. Main St., Henderson, Texas, 75652, or email dhiggs@thefbc.org.

Pleasant Hill Baptist Church / Bauxite, AR, is seeking a **worship leader**. Please send resume to Pleasant Hill Baptist Church, 24310 N. Sardis Rd., Bauxite, AR 72011 Attn: Steve Barnes.

Emory Baptist Church (70 miles east of Dallas) is seeking a **FT pastor of worship and senior adults**. This position will give leadership to a church-wide, comprehensive music ministry including but not limited to planning and leading two blended worship services each week and leading occasionally with an instrument and directing adult choir rehearsal. Additional responsibilities will include a comprehensive ministry to senior adults. Applicants can submit resumes to Pat McDaniel

at patmcdanal@aol.com or 1175 RSCR 3503, Emory, TX, 75440.

First Baptist Church of Dumas is seeking a **full-time youth pastor**. Those interested should send a resume to FBC Dumas, 200 E. Watterman, Dumas, AR 71639.

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

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

Perryville FBC is seeking a **bi-vocational music director**. Send resumes to pvfb.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.

## MISCELLANEOUS

**Hospitality House Manager** Position: HH located McAlester, OK. Seeking house manager (couple preferred and perfect for retired pastor). HH provides facility for inmate families in correction facilities in McAlester. Volunteer position but excellent housing provided. Contact Faye Durant (972-765-9717) or Mike Scifres (918-617-1504) or email scifresm@gmail.com.

Submit your classified at  
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MAY 27, 2018

Paul had been called up to the third heaven where He “heard things that cannot be told, which man may not utter” (2 Cor. 12:4, ESV). He could have been arrogant and prideful about that experience, but God gave him a thorn in the flesh to keep him humble and dependent on the Lord. Three times Paul asked God to remove it, and God said, “No,” but added, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Paul declared, “I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me” (2 Cor. 12:9, ESV).

To be falsely accused is undoubtedly one of the most hurtful things one can experience. If we don’t respond, we look guilty. If we defend ourselves, we appear to be making excuses. Similarly, Paul was called upon to defend his authority as an apostle. At the same time, he felt compelled to admonish and encourage the believers in Corinth.

Paul was being criticized by false

apostles, and his apostleship was questioned. He feared he would have to deal with serious sins of believers living contrary to the will of God (2 Cor. 12:21). He had warned them of the consequences of sin and promised discipline for the unrepentant.

If they demanded proof of his apostolic authority, it would be given in terms of God’s response to sin; however, Paul wanted to use his God-given power to build up and not to tear down. Desiring to help the Corinthian Christians mature spiritually, he exhorted them to realize that Christ

was living in them, and offered a benediction: “Finally, brothers, rejoice. Aim for restoration, comfort one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you” (2 Cor. 13:11, ESV).

As Christians, we often need to be reminded, like the Corinthians, that Christ lives in us (2 Cor. 13:5). We are weak in our sins, but in His strength we are made complete.

## EXPLORE THE BIBLE

## Finding strength

2 CORINTHIANS 12:7B-10; 13:2-8

Our God worked to deliver the Jews from Haman’s evil plot to destroy them. After Queen Vashti defiantly disobeyed her husband, King Ahasuerus, she was dethroned, and in the providence of the Almighty God, Esther was made queen.

Esther’s courage to approach the king and plead for the Jews came from God, and Haman’s wicked plot backfired. He was hanged on the very gallows he had prepared for Mordecai, and the king honored Mordecai in the way that Haman himself had desired to be honored. But the story did not end with Haman’s death.

God again gave Esther the courage to approach King Ahasuerus and implore him to overturn the edict that would destroy the Jews (Esth. 8:4-6). Not only did the king again extend to her the golden scepter of acceptance, but also he heard her plea, giving her and Mordecai his signet ring and commissioning them to write, as they saw fit, a new decree that would save the Jews from sure destruction

(Esth. 8:7-8).

In celebration of the victory of the Jews’ defeat of their enemies, Mordecai declared an annual time of feasting and rejoicing to remind the Jews of that time when God delivered them and turned the tables on their enemies (Esth. 9:20-22).

Esther honored God and was instrumental in saving her people from utter destruction. God used Mordecai to encourage and assist her and blessed them, not for their own personal satisfaction, but for the future of His people. He even rewarded Esther by placing her over the house of Haman.

Man’s evil intents will never succeed over God’s divine plan. Esther had indeed been placed in a position of power and influence “for such a time as this” (Esth. 4:14).

As we continue to see unfairness and injustice all around us, we must ask God for the ability to stand firm and depend on His strength. Like Esther and her countrymen, we also need to celebrate along the way.

## BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

## Keep standing

ESTHER 8:1-8; 9:20-22

JUNE 3, 2018

Saul, a shy and timid man, was anointed by God as Israel’s first king. Pride crept in as his reign enjoyed great success. Victories mounted for Saul, yet young David’s popularity grew more than Saul’s popularity. Saul was consumed with jealousy that evolved into hatred of David, whom he perceived as his enemy. Saul’s disobedience to God had put him outside of God’s blessing and grace. Mentally unstable, Saul was obsessed with trying to kill David or having him killed.

David may have feared for his life, and he would have certainly been justified if he had retaliated.

Instead, he chose to respect Saul as God’s anointed one and refused to take Saul’s life, even when he had the opportunity to do so on more than one occasion.

When David heard of Saul and Jonathan’s death by the Amalekite man, David tore his clothes and mourned and fasted with his men (2 Sam. 1:11). Even though Saul showed himself to be an enemy, David had the Amalekite man put to death because he had killed Saul, God’s anointed.

David penned a lament or poem called “the song of the bow” (2 Sam. 2:17), honoring Saul and Jonathan. David could have told of Saul’s hatred toward him or how Saul tried to kill him, or he could have bragged about when he had opportunity to take Saul’s life, but he chose not to do so. Instead, he extolled their military victories and the true faithfulness of his best friend Jonathan.

After Saul’s death, God led David up to Hebron where he was later anointed king of Judah (2 Sam. 2:1). He learned that the men of Jabesh-gilead from the northern tribes, who were loyal to Saul, had given him a proper burial. David blessed them for showing kindness to Saul and asked God to show loving kindness to them in return (2 Sam. 2:6).

What a tremendous example we have from the life of David who demonstrated respect for God’s leaders. We, too, must seek God’s counsel and leadership, loving our enemies as God does and showing this in ways that honor God.

Have you ever wondered, “Why am I even here?” It is not by chance. We live and move because God created us with design and purpose. He desires to live in each one of us to fulfill His purpose. We are not on our own.

It is difficult for us to comprehend how God created the heavens and the earth. Genesis shows the origins of the universe. God, by His divine Word, spoke “everything that is” into existence, embellished it and gave order to it all. Then He breathed life into a lump of dirt that He fashioned into His image to be the first man, Adam. He then created Eve. His companions were created to enjoy fellowship with Him and bring glory to His name.

We are blessed to be able to read God’s Word and to see in His plan of salvation history that humans were to grow in knowledge of God, know His love and bring glory to Him (Isa. 43:7). The ultimate purpose of humankind is to glorify God.

How do we do that? Part of glorifying God is to acknowledge Who He is as our Creator and Sustainer and to praise and worship Him. Because God created humans in His image, humankind’s purpose to glorify Him cannot be fulfilled apart from Him.

Sin separates us from God and makes it impossible to glorify Him on our own. As Romans 3:23-24 tells us, through Jesus Christ’s sacrifice, our relationship with God is reconciled. Our sin is forgiven.

God has a plan and a purpose for our lives. This was established in the beginning. We struggle many times to find out what that is and how it plays out. We need to understand that we are created in a special way to receive God as life, enjoy Him, worship Him and live in Him. He has given us the gift of His Holy Spirit through His Son to live in us so that God may be expressed to others through us. Let us glorify Him together. After all, that is why we are here!

## BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

## Why are we even here?

GENESIS 1:1-5; 26-31

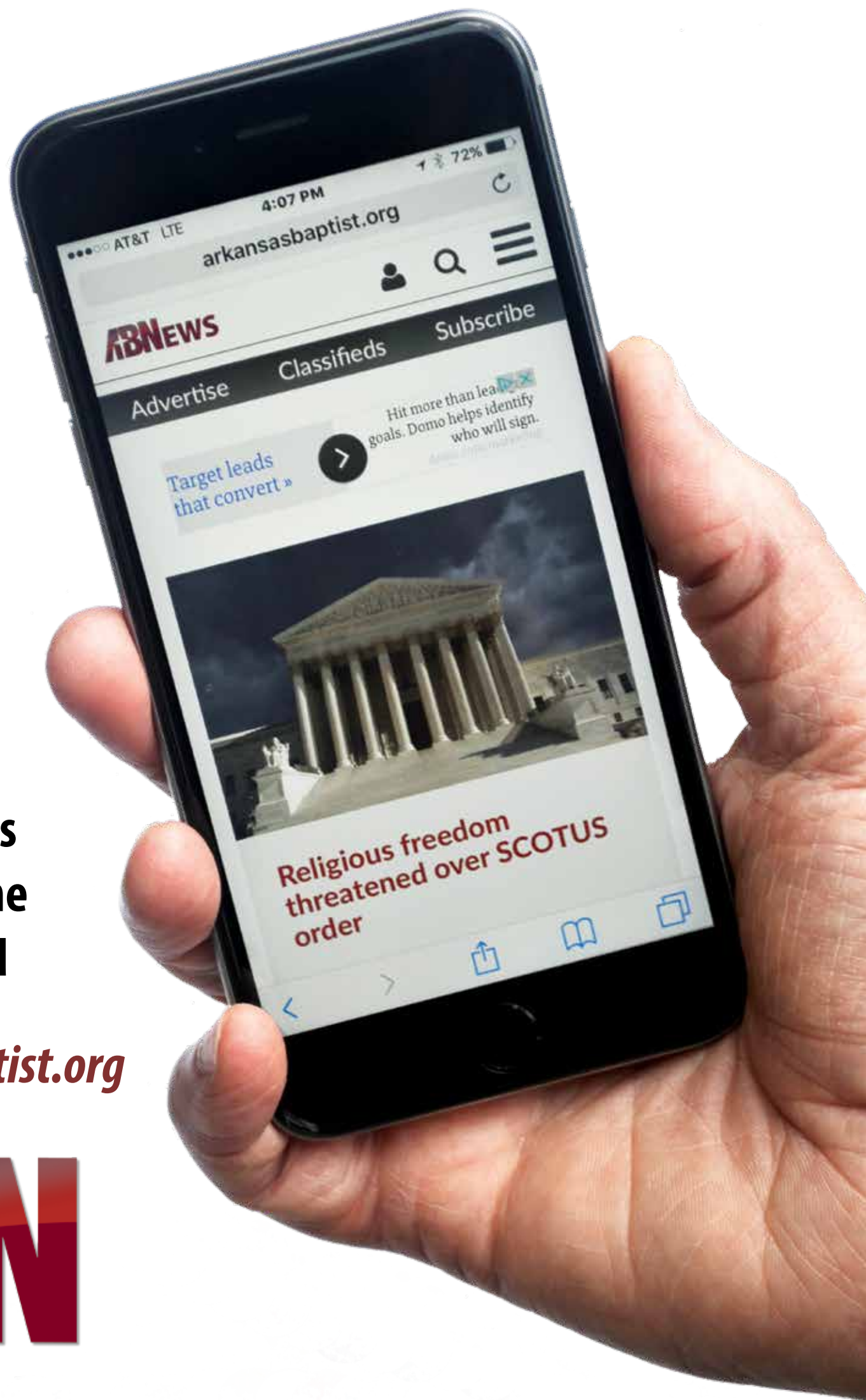
## Featured commentary writer



David Vick

**David Vick** and wife, Barbara, served in Argentina for 29 years as Southern Baptist missionaries through the International Mission Board, where, for 19 years, David was director of the Baptist Theological Institute of Misiones. Now retired, the Vicks reside in Hot Springs, where they are members of First Baptist Church, Hot Springs, and David teaches inductive Bible studies. David holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Ouachita Baptist University and a Master of Divinity degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. The Vicks’ two grown children, Kevin and Cindy, live in Texas and Nebraska, respectively.





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