

ABN Digest

Stories of interest
to Arkansas Baptists

Louisiana College quits CCCU over LGBT policy

PINEVILLE, La. - Louisiana College President Rick Brewer has notified the Council of Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU) that the Baptist-affiliated college has withdrawn its membership from the organization.

The issue involves a policy passed by the CCCU board of directors endorsing so-called "Fairness for All" legislation to add sexual orientation and gender identity to the list of federally-protected classes while also articulating protections for churches and religious organizations.

Brewer, in a letter to CCCU President Shirley Hoogstra, strongly objected to the CCCU board's action last October.

"Sometimes the answer to such matters is to agree to disagree," Brewer wrote. "But the import and impact of the 'Fairness for All' initiative calls for Louisiana College to respectfully disagree with the CCCU's stance."

Describing what had been a "long and beneficial relationship" with CCCU, Brewer ended all ties. "By conviction I cannot endorse the 'Fairness for All' initiative nor be willfully associated with any entity that does," he said.

Louisiana College, with 1,250 students, is affiliated with the Louisiana Baptist Convention.

The CCCU describes itself as "a higher education association of more than 180 Christian institutions around the world" and states its mission is "to help our institutions transform lives by faithfully relating scholarship and service to biblical truth." Shirley Mullen, vice chair of the CCCU board and president of Houghton College, said the CCCU position on LGBT protections is one of practicality for Christian higher education.

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Allison, founder of Mid-America Seminary, dies

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP) - B. Gray Allison, who gave theological strength to the conservative resurgence in the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) as the founder of Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary (MABTS), died Feb. 12 in Memphis, Tenn. He was 94.

Through the seminary, Allison also buttressed Southern Baptists' evangelistic commitment.

Allison founded the seminary after 20-plus years as a pastor, professor at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, evangelism staff member at the Home Mission Board (now North American Mission Board) and full-time evangelist.

In founding MABTS in 1972 in Little Rock with four professors and 28 students, Allison established a conservative alternative to the SBC's six seminaries - seven years before the conservative resurgence began to take root with the 1979 election of the late Adrian Rogers as SBC president.

MABTS received no SBC funding and was heavily supported by donors and individual churches - including one widow's gift of \$50,000.

"Dr. Gray Allison was a wonderful man of God," said Steve Gaines, pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in Cordova, Tenn., where Allison was a member and which has been a key Mid-America supporter over the years.

"He loved the Lord Jesus, his family and Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary. He was a brilliant visionary and a diligent worker. He was a soul-winner and a friend to all who share the gospel. I counted it a privilege to be his friend and to serve as his pastor. He will be missed, but never forgotten," said Gaines, the SBC's immediate past president.

MABTS' current president, Michael Spradlin, said Allison's "passion for missions and evangelism touched the world."

"The Lord led Dr. B. Gray Allison to create an institution committed to teaching the Bible's truthfulness and prioritizing practical missions and theology. These distinctives are as true of Mid-America today as they were in 1972," Spradlin said.

Allison led the seminary until 1997, then continued



Allison

as professor and chair of the evangelism department.

The seminary, with an enrollment of nearly 600, has awarded more than 2,800 degrees in its master's and doctoral programs and, more recently, its College at Mid-America.

Over the years, Mid-America graduates have held numerous leadership posts in the SBC, including state convention executives Jim Richards of the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention, J.D. "Sonny" Tucker of Arkansas, Thomas Hammond of Georgia and Jack Kwok of Ohio; SBC Executive Committee

Vice President for Convention Communications and Relations Roger S. (Sing) Oldham; Hershael York, dean of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary's school of theology; Tom Strode, Washington bureau chief for Baptist Press; and Georgia pastor David McKinley and Kentucky pastor Daryl Cornett, both periodic Baptist Press columnists.

Rogers, Bellevue's longtime pastor, said in a 2001 tribute, "I have known this man for almost 50 years. I have seen him walk through scorn and abuse, fire and water for the Word of God. I have never known him to compromise or to back away. Southern Baptists may never know the price that Gray Allison has paid to bring this denomination back to its biblical roots."

Allison is survived by his wife, Voncille, in a marriage spanning 72 years; three children, Suzanne, Charlotte and Gray; six grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren.

The funeral service for Allison was held Feb. 18 in the chapel at Mid-America's Memphis-area campus in Cordova. A celebration service was held Feb. 25.

Greenway nominated to lead Southwestern

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP) - Adam W. Greenway, dean of the Billy Graham School of Missions, Evangelism and Ministry at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, has been unanimously selected by Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary's presidential search committee as their nominee to fill the presidential vacancy.

Greenway, 41, a graduate of Southwestern Seminary, has served in many denominational leadership roles, including vice chairman of the Evangelism Task Force (2018), president of the Kentucky Baptist Convention (2011-12), trustee and board chairman for LifeWay Christian Resources (2005-15), and current chairman of the SBC Committee on Order of Business.

The search committee was scheduled to bring Greenway's nomination to the full trustee board for a vote during a special called meeting to be held Feb. 26-27. If elected, Green-

way will become Southwestern Seminary's ninth president.

In addition to serving as dean of the Billy Graham School, Greenway serves as William Walker Brookes Associate Professor of Evangelism and Apologetics at Southern Seminary. Since becoming dean in 2013, Greenway has led the Billy Graham School to become the largest graduate school at any Southern Baptist seminary with more than 2,100 students currently enrolled.

Appointed in August 2018 by Kevin Ueckert, chairman of Southwestern Seminary's Board of Trustees, the nine-member search committee was composed of men and women from diverse racial, cultural and geographic backgrounds. The committee reviewed dozens of recommendations, resumes and questionnaires from a diverse field of candidates.

In a series of interactions with the search committee, in-



Greenway

cluding nearly a dozen hours of face-to-face meetings, Greenway presented a compelling vision for the future of Southwestern Seminary. Possessing a rich history of "scholarship on fire," Southwestern Seminary can once again be an institution that is known for providing the highest quality theological education to all Southern Baptists, Greenway

told the committee.

A native of Frostproof, Fla., Greenway is a 1998 graduate of Samford University and earned a master of divinity degree from Southwestern Seminary in 2002. He went on to earn a Ph.D. in evangelism and apologetics from Southern Seminary in 2007. In 2016, Greenway completed a master of nonprofit administration degree at the Mendoza College of Business at the University of Notre Dame.

In addition to his denominational service, Greenway has served as pastor and/or interim pastor of a dozen churches across Kentucky, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Texas and Florida.

Greenway met his wife, Carla, as a student at Southwestern. They have been married since 2003 and have two children, Wade, 9, and Caroline, 3.

Carla Greenway has served several Southern Baptist churches, as well as in Christian school administration.

CWJC ministry offers 'a future and a hope'

Trennis Henderson
WMU

PARAGOULD – Future & Hope Christian Women's Job Corps (CWJC) definitely lives up to its name. Based in Paragould, Future & Hope typically equips 10 to 12 women during in-depth 10-week sessions that tackle such practical life skills as basic computer proficiencies, money management, parenting and healthy relationships blended with weekly Bible studies and mentoring.

Amanda*, a CWJC participant who has been on her own since age 15, is now a 24-year-old mother with three young sons who currently live in foster care.

Sharing her motivation for joining the CWJC program, she explained, "I came here to try to get my kids back ... but I need a foundation before I can get them back." Amanda said earning her CWJC certificate and gaining related life skills "is going to better my life and my kids' lives and give me something solid to start with."

CWJC and Christian Men's Job Corps, ministries of National Woman's Missionary Union, include nearly 200 certified sites throughout the nation.

The ministry sites are designed to equip participants, in a Christian context, for life and employment.

Pursuing the vision of "women helping women change their future and find hope," the Paragould ministry echoes Jeremiah 29:11 (NASB), "For I know the plans that I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope."

"Oh my goodness, we have seen God work such miracles in these women," said Carol Foster, site coordinator for Future & Hope. "I think what strikes me the most is just how they feel about themselves and how they begin to understand who they are in God's eyes.

"We always talk about, 'You are who God says you are regardless of what other people have said about you or to you,'" she said. "They begin to get a little sense of that. I see them learning about God through the teachers here, not just in the material but in the way that they're accepted and



Volunteer Rhonda Davis gives CWJC participants instruction in keyboarding at Future & Hope in Paragould.

loved on throughout the program. It allows us to treat them like they're special because we know that they are but they just haven't seen it so often. To me, that's the biggest thing."

Just a few weeks into the program, Amanda noted, "I have come to the realization that God is my outlet and He's going to provide my every need, and that's never been something that's ever went through my mind before. My faith has grown so much, and I know that no matter what, I don't have to turn to drugs because I'm not alone. God is going to provide my every need."

Acknowledging that, "I have always depended on men who were not good for me or for my kids," Amanda added, "Now I depend on God. I feel better, I feel more content, more happy than I've ever felt. ... I'm excited for my kids to have like a mom, not a teenager or not a friend. It's what I've always wanted to be. I just didn't know how to do it."

Such results are exactly what Foster had hoped for when she sensed God's guidance to establish Future & Hope several years ago. Since then, she has enlisted numerous individuals, churches and area businesses to help support the ministry.

With a background in school counseling and prison ministry, Foster said she realized there were so many unmet needs among women and families struggling with difficult issues. "When I first heard of Christian Women's Job Corps, it was just like God said, 'That's what I want you

to do,'" she added.

After completing CWJC's Level 1 National Certification Training for Site Coordinators, Foster approached First Baptist Church, Paragould, about using the church's former parsonage as a ministry site.

"They agreed on a trial basis to start this strange ministry and see how it went and reevaluate it at the end of six months," she recalled. "It's been six years, and we've never done a reevaluation. They just allow us to use it, and we try to take the best care of it that we can."

Future & Hope CWJC operates with a team of volunteer teachers as well as a board of directors and an advisory council that provide ministry ideas, personal support and resources to help the ministry succeed.

Jeff Boone, an insurance agent and member of Reynolds Baptist Church, Paragould, serves as chairman of Future & Hope's advisory council. Describing the ministry as "a hand up, not just a handout," he emphasized, "It actually makes a difference in people's lives."

With the program's focus on personal spiritual growth, strengthened relationships and job skills, participants "can learn to take care of themselves as well as their family and then be able to take care of others in the future in our community," he pointed out.

Kathy Mitchell, a longtime women's Bible study leader, was recruited by Foster to lead the program's

weekly Bible study.

"I liked the idea of being able to reach women that would not normally walk through the door of a church, women that are in crisis," Mitchell said. "I hope that I can maybe clear up some misconceptions they have about God and that they'll realize He really does love them, that He's a loving Father."

Recounting a recent example, Mitchell said, "I was teaching on Psalm 23, and one of them jumped up in the middle of class and goes, 'I finally get it!' And she was so excited that God was her Shepherd. She had never understood that before. It made her glow with excitement because she realized He really was watching out for her and caring for her and guiding her."

For Amanda – and dozens of other women who have gone through the program – Future & Hope Christian Women's Job Corps already has made a major impact.

"I'm learning things that I probably should have learned a long time ago as far as making good choices and decisions," Amanda shared. "Just having someone teach me the right thing – having this guidance – is absolutely amazing.

"I'm so grateful for what these women do here. They are not just volunteers; they are angels," she affirmed. "Christian Women's Job Corps gave me my faith and my hope."

**Name changed to protect participant's privacy.*

Trennis Henderson is the national correspondent for Woman's Missionary Union (WMU), SBC.

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SBU committee named to evaluate 'orthodoxy'

BOLIVAR, Mo. – Amid ongoing discussion of a former theology professor's firing at Southwest Baptist University (SBU) and the board's exclusion of a trustee elected by the Missouri Baptist Convention, SBU has announced the members of a Peer Assessment Committee to conduct "evaluations regarding orthodoxy" at the university.

Assessment committee chairman David Dockery, president of Trinity International University, announced the appointment of five additional committee members, according to a Feb. 13 SBU news release.

The committee will visit SBU's Bolivar, Mo., campus before spring break and at least one additional time prior to spring graduation, SBU stated. Committee members will work with administration, faculty and student leaders "to help determine the scope of their assessment."

Clint Bass, the terminated theology professor at issue, saw his Nov. 28 firing upheld by a trustee subcommittee that convened in December. SBU President Eric Turner has accused Bass of violating faculty policy by, among other infractions, "collecting evidence and ascribing views to [faculty colleagues] without personal interaction." An online petition supporting Bass claims he ran afoul of SBU administrators after informing the administration "of his concerns about the doctrinal instability" of SBU's Courts Redford College of Theology and Ministry.

During a Jan. 22 special called trustee meeting, SBU's board voted to censure and exclude a trustee identified by Missouri Baptists' *Pathway* newsjournal as Kyle Lee, who serves as an elder alongside Bass at Southern Hills Baptist Church in Bolivar, Mo.

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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)

Baptist journalism and the soul of the SBC

Editor's note: Tim Yarbrough, editor/executive director of the Arkansas Baptist News, served as 2018-19 president of the Association of State Baptist Publications, which met Feb. 11-14 in Charleston, S.C. Following is his opening presentation made to the group. Read related story, Page 7.



Pressing On

Tim Yarbrough

Phil. 3:14

You will note the theme of our meeting this week is Press On, focused around Philippians 3:14 (ESV): "I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."

For me, Press On helps communicate to Christian journalists and editors:

1) The ultimate call Jesus Christ has placed on our lives and the publications we lead,
2) The dual meaning it has for those who seek to serve God and their profession with professionalism and integrity,

3) That our work must continue, in spite of the many obstacles we may face along the journey, which simply can be the extraordinary pace of life, or the opposition and criticism we sometimes face, and

4) To continue the good fight as we seek to speak truth in love in a culture and society that have so dramatically lost their way and strayed from the tenets of God.

Lest we forget, Christian journalists are deeply tied to these principles of democracy: 1) freedom of religion, 2) freedom of speech and expression and 3) freedom of the press.

Without them, we would not have the vibrant country that we have, but they aren't without their pitfalls.

We know all too well that with freedom, comes great responsibility.

In recent years we have seen the mainstream media cast off responsibility, many times opting to bend the news to fit their own secular, humanist

worldviews.

There are many examples, but one well-known example that directly im-

pacts our work is that liberal and left-wing views are favored over conservative news and opinions on social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter.

Over the past 35 years, my professional career has taken me from being a secular journalist, to being a denominational communications leader, to being a member of the semi-independent Southern Baptist press.

After finishing journalism school in the early 1980s, I went to work on several weekly and daily newspapers in the Midwest and Southeast.

Even as a young reporter, I knew something was wrong with newspapers. The readership decline was on, and it seems no one knew what to do.

In the nearly 40 years since, the United States has seen a dramatic decrease in the number of newspapers serving various audiences, which is a direct result of declining readership.

While large, competing metropolitan dailies may be on the wane, the important work of newspapers is far from over. In fact, the famous, "All news is local," adage is perhaps truer today than ever.

Billionaire Warren Buffett, who has invested extensively in newspapers, said, "If you want to know what's going on in your town – whether the news is about the mayor or taxes or high school football – there is no substitute for a local newspaper. Wherever there is a pervasive sense of community, a paper that serves the special informational needs of that community will remain indispensable ... Papers delivering comprehensive and reliable information to tightly bound communities and having a sensible Internet strategy will remain viable for a long time."

As Southern Baptist journalists, we do that: We inform, inspire and involve

Baptists in our community of kingdom work, while reporting on the news and events of members, churches and the denomination.

I don't think that Southern Baptists want to become a "yes" people who blindly follow their leaders off a cliff. While it is important to trust, at the same time, good stewards hold those in power accountable to the rank-and-file Baptist who drops his or her hard-earned dollars in the offering plate to see the message of the gospel carried throughout the world.

Wise Southern Baptists do not blindly trust their denomination to do the right thing in every instance, but seek to actively participate at

all levels – their church, association, state convention and national convention. Only by their participation, and the transparency of these entities, can trust be maintained.

Being a part of a cooperative-minded denomination demands our faithful engagement as we seek to further the gospel of Jesus Christ until the day He returns.

To lose our newspapers would be like losing a part of the soul of the Southern Baptist denomination.

It is unfathomable to think that one day the work of Southern Baptists in your state would be without an independent voice from pastors

See **SOUL** page 6

Cartoon by Gary Thomas



Volume 118, Number 4
USPS08021

Member of the Association
of State Baptist Publications
Arkansas Press Association
Evangelical Press Association
Baptist Communicators Association

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Arkansas Baptist News (ISSN 1040-6056) is published bi-weekly except the last issue of the year (25 issues) by the Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine, Inc., 10 Remington Drive, Little Rock, AR 72204.

SUBSCRIPTION rates are \$9.75 per year (Every Resident Family Plan or Group), \$17 per year (Individual). Arkansas Baptist News, 10 Remington Drive, Little Rock, AR 72204; phone 501-376-4791; toll-free 800-838-2272;

email: abn@arkansasbaptist.org. Periodical Postage paid at Little Rock, AR.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR: Send Letters to the Editor to tim@arkansasbaptist.org or to our mailing address. Letters must be typed, doublespaced and 300 words or less (fewer words the better). Letters must be signed and marked "for publication" and may be edited to fit space requirements.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Arkansas Baptist News, 10 Remington Drive,

Little Rock, AR 72204.

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The historical Jesus: Part 1

There is no more sacred doctrine in all of Christianity than the resurrection. It is the pinnacle of all Christian beliefs. If the resurrection did not happen, then Christianity is false.

It would be difficult to make sense of Christianity if Jesus only spiritually or metaphorically rose from the dead. For 2,000 years, Christians have claimed that Jesus bodily, physically rose from the dead. If this is not true, then for more than 2,000 years Christians have believed a lie. But I have good news! It is true, and I believe the evidence shows that it is true.



Deep Waters

Chad Meeks

Over the next several columns, I'd like to write on the historical evidence of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This column will briefly mention the reality

that Jesus of Nazareth actually lived. If there is no Jesus, then there is no resurrection. Thus, it is important to establish first things first here.

There has been quite a bit of Internet banter over the past 10 years regarding the historical nature of Jesus' existence. These Jesus-doubters are generally called "mythicists," because they claim that the historical Jesus is simply a myth. They claim that the figure of Jesus was an invention of early church leaders, but no such person ever existed.

Most who oppose the historical Jesus are not scholars versed in ancient Near Eastern history. Most are atheists who key in on minor conspiracies or historical profundities, and then they build a narrative from there. However, the overwhelming majority of ancient Near Eastern scholars agree that Jesus of Nazareth was a real historical figure. For example, even Bart Ehrman, the famed atheist and former evangelical Christian, in his book, "Did Jesus Exist?" writes, "...there are several points on which virtually all scholars of antiquity agree. Jesus was a Jewish man, known to be a preacher and teacher, who was crucified (a Roman form of execution) in Jerusalem during the reign of the Roman emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was the governor of Judea."

Granted, just because a bunch of scholars agree on something doesn't make it so. To counter the proliferation of historical evidence for the life of Jesus, one would need to submit some pretty strong evidence, but no evidence exists.

It is quite baffling that folks would doubt the historical reality of Jesus' existence. We have not only Jewish and Roman historical evidence (Josephus and Pliny the Younger, respectively), but also the gospel narratives themselves.

I once had an individual ask me, "Can you prove that Jesus was real without using the Bible?" I responded, "Why would I want to?" Why would I ignore the most prolific and abundant historical evidence regarding the life of Jesus Christ? Why would I overlook or ignore the abundance of historical textual evidence that points to the existence of Jesus of Nazareth? It just seems like intellectual suicide to overlook such clear affirmation. What other inquirer in any academic focus or intellectual pursuit is asked to ignore the most reliable and prolific sources within the field?

Thus, in regards to the life and resurrection of Christ, Christians need not fear: There is an abundance of historical evidence, both biblical and extra-biblical, verifying Christ's existence and resurrection.

Chad Meeks is associate pastor of youth and discipleship at Cedar Heights Baptist Church in North Little Rock.



The recent media coverage reporting incidents of abuse in Southern Baptist churches is very heartbreaking and grievous. Our local churches are the very place where people should be loved, affirmed, valued and protected; yet, in some places they have become places where people are harmed.



Executive Directions

Sonny Tucker

The largeness of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC) (1,556 churches and 500,000 members) and the Southern Baptist Convention (more than 15 million members and 50,000 churches and missions) certainly means we deal with all kinds of people, including those who range from being prone to sex abuse to actual predators. We must do all within our power to educate, train, and prevent abuse, and to accept the responsibility to care for victims of abuse.

The ABSC has intense and ongoing measures to assist

our churches in training on this subject. Our training focuses on the three broad areas of sexual harassment, children's safety issues and victims of past abuse.

For the children's safety issues, we have partnered with MinistrySafe, a law firm out of Dallas that has developed a five-part safety

system to protect children and those who serve them in churches and child-serving organizations. The problem of child sexual abuse is significant and growing, and abusers have no visual profile. Background checks are valuable in detecting those convicted of abuse, but background checks are not enough. Ongoing training and safeguards are vital to protecting children and are a direct responsibility of each congregation. It is my personal goal to have trained staff and workers, as well as safeguard policies and procedures, in each of our Arkansas Baptist churches.

We have two upcoming church security conferences, which include such topics as dealing with allegations of abuse and a special emphasis on protecting children and youth, on March 26 at Park Hill Baptist Church, North Little Rock, and April 11 at Central Baptist Church, Jonesboro.

I encourage Arkansas Baptists to understand that we should actively engage in making sure we conduct proper background checks, attend training, implement safeguard policies and procedures in our churches, and understand that we are required to be mandatory reporters. We must accept responsibility to minister to victims of abuse. More resources will be available in June to assist churches in this. Please contact us with any questions or assistance.

Jesus Christ modeled by His actions the value and importance of children. We can do no less.

J.D. "Sonny" Tucker is executive director of the ABSC.

Have your cake and eat it too

If you've been in ministry very long at all, you've undoubtedly been exposed to the tension or argument between events/programs and personal interaction/small groups. There are proponents for each, and, like in most ongoing, unresolved tensions, there's probably a time and place for both.

The answer is likely to be balance. And every church, every pastor, and every Christian have to walk through life to find their proper balance.

Knowing that, of course, does not keep me from receiving literally hundreds of solicitations for each new "hot" conference or large event happening in Christendom around the nation each year. I'll admit that, now that I'm in my 23rd year of vocational ministry, I'm not as drawn to the glamor of the big conferences and the big-name speakers as I once was.

But, like I said earlier, I do think there's room for balance. There's a time and

place, which is kind of the point of this article. I'd like to spend a moment arguing that you can really have your cake and eat it too ... at least when it comes to the tension of events vs. personal interaction in your own journey into ministry training and leadership.

You're likely reading this because you serve a church in the state of Arkansas, and if that's true, I'd love for you to consider using the Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC) as your "event" family. You may find, over time, that it actually transforms into your "small group" family too.

Let me explain. Each year, the ABSC team offers ECON (the statewide Conference on Evangelism and Church Health) in January, a wonderful time of evangelism training and pastoral encouragement, and a time that has now been accentuated with breakout sessions and other practical, targeted events. Then there's Lead/Defend (an apologetics conference), Inspire (a women's

conference), and the ABSC Pastor's Conference and annual meeting (filled with preaching, teaching and networking), just to name a few.

In my experience, all of these events are just as good as some of the "big" events I've traveled to in the past. But, better yet, all of these events are now designed to create relationships - to network pastoral leaders in Arkansas with other leaders. You're attending the event with your greater Arkansas family, and you can create accountability and nurture friendships while you're doing the "big" thing. Isn't that the best of both worlds?

I've enjoyed seeing the connections made between other leaders, and how the sense of isolation, loneliness and even discouragement pastoral leaders feel when hunkered down in their home church is often shattered by the friendships developed within the ABSC family. Why not join us at the new "big" event and get better connected?

Greg Sykes is pastor of First Baptist Church, Russellville, and president of the ABSC.



President's Perspective

Greg Sykes

ABUSE

continued from page one

procedures ahead of time ... a lot of times we have a tendency to say, 'Something has happened, we need to do something,' we are trying to put safeguards in place ahead of time so you are never getting into a situation where you are having to be reactive."

Strategies for protecting minors have become one of the most important aspects of the training provided during the ABSC's church security conferences, said Smith, adding that less than 5 percent of offenders will show up on a background check.

"You need to do background checks, but that doesn't need to be your only stop gap," she said. "You have got to have other policies and procedures in place to protect the minors in your care."

MinistrySafe often recommends sexual abuse awareness training for church leaders that "helps leaders know what red flags to look for," Smith said. "A lot of what you need to put in place is not necessarily just protection for the minors, but it's also protection for your leaders as well."

The ABSC will host church security seminars March 26 at Park Hill Baptist Church, North Little Rock, and April 11 at Central Baptist Church, Jonesboro. MinistrySafe trainings will be held May 13 in Jonesboro and May 21 at the ABSC building in Little Rock.

Repent and reform

This past summer, in his first few weeks as SBC president, Greear appointed a Sexual Abuse Advisory Group (SAAG). The group's goal, Greear said, is "not to meet the minimal requirements for ethical reporting, but to ensure maximum protection for those God has put within our care."

The group, funded by the SBC EC and Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC), aims to match the gospel proclaimed by Southern Baptists with actions that combat sexual abuse, said Greear.

"We have been working with survivors, advocates, activists, pastors, denominational leaders, counselors, law enforcement and attorneys – people from both inside the SBC and outside – among

the most qualified experts in the country, and over half of which are women – to analyze our system, structures and church culture on where we are missing the mark," said Greear.

"More importantly, this advisory group will show us how we can move forward," he said.

Call to action

From initial findings of the SAAG, Greear called Southern Baptists to action in 10 areas associated with sexual abuse.

First, Greear said, "We need to repent for a decades of inaction."

Second, he announced an upcoming 12-lesson, 20-minute free training resource titled, "Becoming a Church that Cares Well for the Abused."

Third, Greear announced that the six Southern Baptist seminaries, "officers of the SBC associational leaders," and all the state conventions have agreed to documents stating shared principles on abuse.

Fourth, "I am asking that churches, associations, conventions and entities take immediate action to review their policies and procedures relating to abuse," said Greear.

Fifth, "I am asking the Executive Committee to strongly consider requiring background checks, at a minimum, for all SBC standing committees and trustee appointments," he said.

Sixth, Greear called Southern Baptists to "reexamine ... ordination processes for pastors and deacons," including more rigorous background checks and screening processes.

Seventh, Greear said, "I am calling on our state convention partners and LifeWay to work together to identify additional questions related to abuse that can be added to the Annual Church Profile. I'd love to see questions about abuse prevention policies that allow us to verify if churches have stringent policies in place, are updating those policies annually, and provide an opportunity to indicate if an abuse allegation involving the church occurred in the past year."

Eighth, Greear highlighted four ways that sexual abuse will be addressed during this year's SBC Annual Meeting in Birmingham, Ala., including: 1) prayer and lament, 2) a study group report, 3) an event titled, "Sexual Abuse and the

Southern Baptist Convention," and 4) through providing resources.

Ninth, Greear addressed the question of creating a convention-wide database of sex offenders. The SAAG is discussing the possibility of a database, but it is a complicated discussion. "Just because we are not announcing any plans regarding a database tonight does not mean that we are not doing everything we can to evaluate it as an option," he said.

A tenth action, Greear said, "Our advisory group strongly believes that the governing documents of the Southern Baptist Convention should be reviewed and amended to address the definition of a cooperating church."

"We must take bold and decisive steps to send an unequivocal message: Churches that have a wanton disregard for sexual abuse and for caring for the survivors are not in good fellowship with this convention."

Commenting on recent reports of Southern Baptist churches displaying "a wanton disregard for the seriousness of abuse," Greear said that the "act of disfellowshipping a church is a serious one" but

"we also should not dismiss concerns and allegations out of hand. The stakes are simply too high."

Greear called on the SBC's bylaws workgroup of the administrative committee to investigate "whether the following churches meet the standards of having a faith and practice which closely identifies with the Convention's adopted statement of faith."

The 10 churches listed by Greear were at the EC meeting were: Arapaho Baptist Church, Garland, Texas; Bolivar Baptist Church, Sanger, Texas; Brentwood Baptist Church, Houston, Texas; Cathedral of Faith, Houston, Texas; Eastside Baptist Church, Marietta, Ga.; First Baptist Church, Bedford, Texas; Second Baptist Church, Houston, Texas; Sovereign Grace Church, Louisville, Ky.; Trinity Baptist Church, Ashburn, Ga.; and Turner Street Baptist Church, Springdale.

Although Greear specifically mentioned Turner Street Baptist Church, Springdale, in his remarks, the church does not cooperate with the ABSC, nor Southern Baptist Convention. It is affiliated with the Baptist Missionary Association of America.

"Our goal here is never dis-

fellowship, but correction," said Greear.

Thanking the media for shining a light on the "horrific sin" of sexual abuse within the SBC, Greear added, "Friends in the media, you are not our enemy, you have done us a great gift by shining light on this evil that so many have been posting about and speaking out about for decades. And for that, on behalf of all Southern Baptists, I thank you."

Calling this time in the SBC's history a "gospel moment," Greear said, "If we don't get this right, our churches will not be a safe place for the lost. That's not something I'm OK with, and I know it's not something you're OK with."

In closing, Greear reminded Southern Baptists "God has promised to fight for His church."

"When I think of the future of the SBC, I believe that the Holy Spirit has great days ahead. If we keep the gospel above all, heed the voice of the Holy Spirit, commit ourselves to His mission, and cast ourselves upon His mercy, the gates of hell will not stand a chance," he said.

Contact Caleb Yarbrough at caleb@arkansasbaptist.org.

SOUL

continued from page 4

and laypeople alike provided through the Baptist newspaper.

At the same time, we must acknowledge that these are challenging times for all print publications. The Internet and the emergence of social media have forever changed the way a state Baptist newspaper functions and seeks to reach its various audiences.

In the book, "Saving Community Journalism," researcher Penelope Muse Abernathy states, "(W)hat is important is not the size of a paper's print circulation, but rather the mission of the paper."

I couldn't agree more.

Abernathy goes on to say, "Publishers and editors can begin by asking this simple question: If your newspaper ceased publishing tomorrow, who has the most to lose? The answer in most communities – rural and urban, large and small – is that there would be a tremendous vacuum for many, including readers and public officials who depend

on the newspaper to be a credible and comprehensive source of news and information that affects the community; advertisers who depend on the newspaper to connect them with local consumers of their goods and services; and shareholders, employees and vendors who rely on the newspaper for income."

While Abernathy's book is written about for-profit newspapers, I believe her words ring vitally true to Baptist journalism as well.

Abernathy knows her stuff, and it is stuff Baptist journalists and editors need to know!

She doesn't surmise, assume, speculate or take the word of constituents. She surveys, studies, evaluates and reports findings.

I am excited to have her with us this week for a significant time of sharing, evaluating and setting a course for the future of Baptist journalism.

I have often said, when speaking to various groups across the state regarding the importance of maintaining a strong state Baptist newspaper, "After all, if we don't tell

our story, who will?"

But in reality the function of a state Baptist newspaper goes far beyond that. While its duty is to tell the story of how God is working among Southern Baptists, a newspaper plays just as important a role in documenting the times in which it is published.

Without it, interpretation of the activities of the denomination will be left up to the public relations strategists and communications spin-doctors.

Scripture tells us, "Listen to advice and accept instruction, that you may gain wisdom in the future. Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the Lord that will stand" (Proverbs 19:20-21, ESV) and "Without counsel plans fail, but with many advisers they succeed" (Proverbs 15:22, ESV).

May God grant us wisdom, discernment and understanding as we seek to effectively utilize the resources He has given us to effectively communicate the gospel to a lost and dying world.

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

Southern Baptist editors challenged to 'press on'

Margaret Colson
Arkansas Baptist News

CHARLESTON, S.C. – More than 30 members of the Association of State Baptist Publications (ASBP) gathered for their annual meeting Feb. 11-14 in Charleston, S.C., where they learned from author and university professor Penelope Muse Abernathy and also heard reports from denominational leaders.

With the theme, Press On, based on Philippians 3:14, editors were challenged to persevere in their callings as Christian journalists, in spite of today's daunting challenges.

"The ASBP meeting gives those who lead state Baptist newspapers and other publications the opportunity to discuss opportunities and challenges faced in today's ever-changing publishing environment," said Tim Yarbrough, editor/executive director of the *Arkansas Baptist News* and 2018-19 president of ASBP, an organization in existence since 1895.

Community journalism

Abernathy, Knight chair in journalism and digital media economics at the University of North Carolina, led three sessions on Tuesday, Feb. 12. Topics were: How the World Has Changed/What We Know So Far, A New Model for Nurturing Community, and What I've Learned and What I'll Do Differently. Abernathy, who has done extensive research on community newspapers,

is author of the book "Saving Community Journalism."

She explained that she uses the term "community newspaper" in a broad sense to include magazines, podcasts and "everything you have to tell your story."

"It is critical that community newspapers survive," she said.

"It was refreshing to hear from researcher Penelope Abernathy, who states, "(W)hat is important is not the size of a paper's print circulation, but rather the mission of the paper," Yarbrough said.

"Abernathy offered leaders of Baptist newspapers and publications strategies for improving their reach as they seek to compete during the digital age and inform, inspire and involve Southern Baptists in our 'community' of kingdom work."

Yarbrough explained, "In recent years we have seen the mainstream media cast aside their responsibility of objective journalism, many times opting to bend the news to fit their own secular and humanist worldview. Baptist journalists have the responsibility to inform Southern Baptists about the work of their denomination so they can make informed decisions regarding funding, governance and missionary deployment."

Denominational leaders

Throughout the meeting, participants heard from Southern Baptist entity leaders, including Paul Chitwood,



Penelope Muse Abernathy, right, speaks to editors and journalists Feb. 12 at the annual meeting of the Association of State Baptist Publications (ASBP) held in Charleston, S.C. The ASBP has been in existence since 1895. Photos by Caleb Yarbrough

newly elected president of the International Mission Board (IMB). As he settles into his new role, Chitwood said he is taking time to "ask, listen and learn." He acknowledged that in recent years the IMB has been challenged, because of downsizing and other factors, in its task of communicating God's work in the world. He committed to "beef up" communications at the IMB and announced that he has hired Roger Alford from the Kentucky Baptist Convention (KBC) as IMB communications vice president. In answer to a question, Chitwood explained that KBC's decision to merge the historic Kentucky Baptist paper, *Western Recorder*, with the KBC communications office was largely a cost-saving measure as well as a move intended to expand the KBC's ability to communicate with a larger audience.

North American Mission Board (NAMB) President Kevin Ezell spoke to the group, stating, "Everything we do is about the gospel." He outlined NAMB'S church planter assessment process, saying that NAMB needs 4,000 church planter applications to send 1,200 church planters annually. He described NAMB'S organizational leadership with four vice presidents, before introducing Johnny Hunt, NAMB'S vice president of evangelism and leadership. Hunt introduced a new evangelism initiative, Who's Your

One? and he described how one person leading him to salvation has made such an enormous impact worldwide. The initiative is designed to be customizable by churches, associations and state conventions, Ezell explained. As a part of this evangelism focus, leaders from NAMB plan to visit seven or eight states for evangelism rallies. "Evangelism rallies need to be evangelistic," Hunt said. Ezell noted that NAMB leadership had "underestimated the need to encourage and beg pastors to be evangelistic."

J.D. Greear, president of the Southern Baptist Convention and pastor of The Summit Church in Raleigh-Durham, N.C., spent about 40 minutes with state paper editors and staff.

He explained the six things he has championed during his tenure as president and also spoke to the sexual abuse issue in the denomination today, stating, "Now is not the time to defend ourselves," but rather now is the time to "lament and mourn." He further expressed, "The safety of victims is priority over reputation of churches." (See related story, Page 1.)

Participants also heard reports from O.S. Hawkins, president/chief executive officer, GuideStone Financial Resources; Sandy Wisdom-Martin, executive director-treasurer, Woman's Missionary Union, SBC; Carol Pipes,

director, corporate communications, LifeWay Christian Resources; Shawn Hendricks, editor, Baptist Press, and Randy Adams, state executive director, Northwest Baptist Convention. Devotionals were led by Yarbrough; David Williams, editor of the *Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist*, and Kevin Parker, editor of the *Baptist New Mexican*.

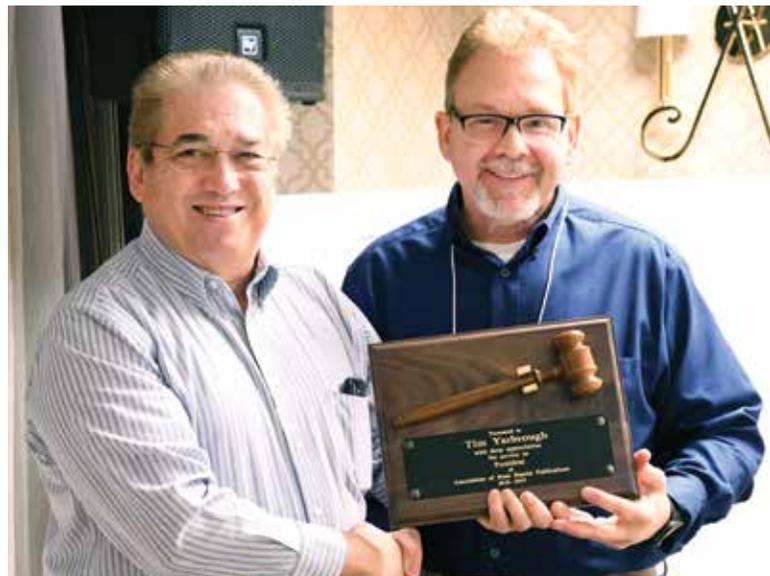
Participants also heard a synopsis report on a recent state Baptist paper survey. The survey revealed great diversity in how state Baptist papers accomplish their mission but a common commitment to the mission of communicating with Southern Baptists.

Business session

In the ASBP business session on Thursday, Feb. 14, members honored K. Allan Blume, who is retiring May 31, as editor of the (North Carolina) *Biblical Recorder*.

The group also remembered Jack Harwell, former editor of *The Christian Index* (Georgia) and former ASBP president, who died recently. In closing, Yarbrough passed the ASBP gavel to Williams, who will serve as ASBP president 2019-20. Jennifer Rash, editor of *The Alabama Baptist*, was elected ASBP president-elect, to serve 2020-21. The next ASBP annual meeting will be held Feb. 10-13 in Tucson, Ariz.

Contact Margaret Colson at margaret@arkansasbaptist.org.



Tim Yarbrough (right), editor/executive director of the *Arkansas Baptist News*, is congratulated by David Williams, incoming president and editor of the *Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist*, for completing the 2018-19 term as president of the Association of State Baptist Publications.



Nicole Porchia (right), director of the Academic Success Center and multicultural student programs at Ouachita Baptist University, instructs students. Porchia is a 2009 graduate of Ouachita. *OBU photo*

Beyond academics: Equipping students to rise and shine

Nicole Porchia
Ouachita Baptist University

ARKADELPHIA – “Get up, get dressed, show up and never give up.”

This is what I tell all of the students who come through the Academic Success Center (ASC) at Ouachita Baptist University. We offer workshops, tutoring and one-on-one counsel to help students achieve their academic goals – to truly rise and shine.

I had a student who came into the ASC with a low reading level. I told him that it wasn’t going to be easy, but if he was willing to work, he could do this. We met every week, and he was tutored for

almost every one of his classes. He was in our office every day.

I remember the first time he wrote an essay and made a “C.” We celebrate those kinds of “C’s” in the center! We were almost in tears because we knew how hard he had worked, even after hours of tutoring. He rose to the challenge. Students like him rise to the occasion and realize, “I can make it here.”

However, there is no cookie-cutter solution for student success.

We – and other faculty and staff on campus – want to meet students where they are and equip them for any chal-

See **BEYOND** page 10

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Student-athletes balance competition and the classroom

Brett Cooper
Williams Baptist University

WALNUT RIDGE – Being a college athlete is a dream come true for many young men and women. They get to play a sport they love at a high level, and they personify school pride, with their school’s name emblazoned across their uniform.

But it also involves a great deal of work and commitment that include grueling workouts, lengthy practices and arriving home from road games at 2 a.m., only to roll out of bed in time for an 8 a.m. class. Doing all of these things while maintaining their grades requires diligent

time management.

“Being a student-athlete brings about a demanding schedule filled with workouts, practices, games, other extracurricular activities, class and homework. However, my experience at Williams has been nothing short of amazing. My professors at WBU encourage me to be the best I can be, both in the classroom and on the field,” said Tori Johnson, a junior from Clinton, and infielder for the Williams Baptist University (WBU) softball team.

Brad Baine has experienced college athletics from all sides. A standout basketball player for WBU in the 1990s, he now serves as academic dean and

vice president for academic affairs and student life. He is also a faculty member in the Williams Teacher Education Program and a former volleyball coach. From all perspectives, he sees the value of college athletics.

“Athletics brings a sense of institutional pride and spirit to college campuses, including Christian campuses,” Baine said. “The athletic events on college campuses allow the college students the opportunity to support their peers and join the athletic experiences. While performing in an athletic competition, a student-athlete has the opportunity to exhibit a Christian attitude through good sportsmanship. This combination of athletics and good sportsmanship can produce an opportunity to integrate faith with athletics.”

But he notes that athletics also presents challenges, both for the student-athletes and their professors. Some sports have extensive travel schedules, which leave faculty members dealing with a significant number of absences from classes.

“For this reason, a professor is commonly required to adapt their teaching methods and assessment practices in order to accommodate and meet the

academic needs of student-athletes. Specifically, the use of group presentations and activities can be difficult to manage if a large portion of the students in a class is not able to attend and complete assignments in a timely manner,” Baine said.

The dean also knows from experience that it can be difficult for student-athletes to balance their academic and athletic responsibilities.

“A student-athlete must be very disciplined and allot the appropriate time for their academic studies. This necessary discipline can be very challenging for a college student-athlete who simply wants to relax and enjoy the leisure and freedom of the college campus life,” he said.

Baine also said their extensive time on the road does not necessarily help athletes with their study time.

“The truth is, athletic road trips are typically not conducive to studying and completing academic work, due to the distractions, motion of the bus, and preparation for the

athletic event. However, as a student-athlete gains college experience and gets acclimated to the traveling adversities, he or she can overcome the distractions and actually use the abundance of travel time to his or her advantage,” Baine said.

Johnson said it is very helpful to be at a university that works hard to accommodate student-athletes.

“When athletes have to miss class because of competition, the professors are willing to teach and tutor us one-on-one, so that you can succeed in the classroom. With the family atmosphere that WBU encompasses, we often have many of the faculty and staff at our games supporting and cheering for us,” she said.

For all of the challenges it may present, the experience of being a college athlete is worth the extra effort, Johnson said. In her view, “Being a student-athlete at Williams is a dream, and one I hope many others get to experience.”

Brett Cooper is vice president for creative services and technology at Williams Baptist University.



Johnson

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'Sending Hope' Annie Armstrong offering theme for 2019

WITH EASTER Sunday less than two months away, the minds of many Arkansas Baptists turn, not to Easter bonnets or Easter egg hunts, but to the Week of Prayer for North American Missions and the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering (AAEO).

"Every step our missionaries take across North America, they are faced with increasing secularism," said Kevin Ezell, president, North American Mission Board (NAMB).

"Many cities have become so irreligious they could reasonably be deemed pre-Christian. Even in the region once deemed the 'Bible Belt,' Christianity is being pushed to the margins.

"North America is also rapidly becoming more diverse culturally and ethnically. Every day, the nations come here.

Many are from people groups whose home countries are extremely difficult to reach.

"We cannot let these gospel opportunities pass us by, and missionaries desperately need the prayers of God's people to succeed," he said.

Arkansas Baptists are called to pray earnestly, give generously and go work alongside our North American missionaries.

The suggested date for this year's Week of Prayer is March 3-10. The 2019 theme is "Sending Hope," based on this year's Scripture focus, "He has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1 Pet. 1:3, CSB). The national AAEO goal is \$70 million, and the Arkansas Baptist goal is \$2.1. Every dollar given goes directly to supporting North

American missionaries.

All Arkansas Baptist churches should have received materials to use in observing

the Week of Prayer for North American Missions and the AAEO. For more information or additional materials, call

the Arkansas Baptist missions team at 800-838-2272, ext. 5137. Other resources are available at anniearmstrong.com.



BEYOND

continued from page 8

lence they may meet, fostering grit and determination. Often, students also are dealing with issues in their lives outside the classroom. Leading students not only to success in the classroom but also in life is truly what Christian higher education is all about. It's so rewarding to tear back the layers, boundaries or insecurities with students and see them grow into the people that they want to become.

That is the work that is happening all across our campus in classrooms, residence halls, club meetings and devotional groups. Since I joined Ouachita seven years ago, the ASC

has worked formally with hundreds of students, providing tools for success and offering encouragement.

So many students find their confidence while at Ouachita. They rise. And they shine. Then they go out from this place as graduates, and in jobs and homes and churches, they make a difference. And that's why we do what we do.

Nicole Porchia is director of the Academic Success Center and multicultural student programs at Ouachita Baptist University. A 2009 Ouachita graduate, she also holds a master's degree in higher education administration from the University of Arkansas.

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First Baptist, Cotter, celebrates deacon of 48 years

COTTER – A celebration service was held Saturday, Jan. 26, at First Baptist Church, Cotter, for James A. Ross, who has served the church as a deacon for 48 years, the longest serving deacon in the church's history.

"I went to church for the first time in 1960. By the time the music began for the invitation, I was in front of the

church," said Ross. "The folks in this church loved me from the beginning. They were good people. So, I stayed in Cotter, and I'm still here today, thank God!"

Many former church members were on hand to share memories of decades gone by, and four former and current deacons of the church were present to share

in the festivities.

"Ross' community spirit and interest have helped to make our city a better place in which to live, from being the building superintendent of our city hall to serving as deacon of First Baptist Church of Cotter for 48 years, as well as many other contributions," said McGeorge Caradine, mayor of Cotter.



Four former and current deacons of First Baptist, Cotter, (from left): Marshal Berg, George Mayfield, James Ross and Cameron Ross.

Stace Cupples, director of missions for White River Baptist Association, and Gayle Brooks, former pastor of First Baptist, Cotter, honored Ross during the ceremony. J.D. "Sonny" Tucker, executive director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC), sent a video offering appreciation to Ross.

"I wish we had 10,000 deacons like Bro. Ross in the state of Arkansas," said Tucker.

Gateway first SBC seminary to offer all master's degrees online

ONTARIO, Calif. – Gateway Seminary will become the first Southern Baptist seminary to offer all its master's degrees completely online in the fall of 2019.

Approval to offer the final two degree programs online came from the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) Feb. 15.

"Having all of our master's degrees online means that

more than ever before, Gateway students have optimum flexibility to hone their ministry skills as they expand God's kingdom around the world," said Kristen Ferguson, Gateway's director of online education. "We couldn't be more thrilled to offer this flexibility to them."

Ferguson said professors teaching online adhere to the best practices found in the

field of online education, including:

- Weekly interaction between students and professor as they engage the content of the course.

- Timely feedback on assignments so that students grow each week.

- High-quality videos intentionally recorded for the online platform and for the online student.

- Contextual assignments integrated in many classes so that students learn on the field and in their own context, then bring that learning experience back to the classroom for guidance and critique.

- Class sizes limited to 24-28 students so that each professor has ample time to invest personally in the lives of each student.

"As a seminary intentionally

designed for the 21st century, we are already well-equipped to serve students from a distance through our library services, student support and administrative guidance," Ferguson said.

**For more news and updates
visit arkansasbaptist.org.**

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Church life

First Baptist Church, Malvern, will be hosting an If: Gathering, a women's discipleship conference, March 1-2. For more information, visit fbcmalvern.org/if.

Murphy's Corner Baptist Church, Newport, will host a revival at 7 p.m. Friday and Saturday, March 8-9, and 11 a.m. Sunday, March 10.

On the move

Ty Danielson is now serving as pastor at First Baptist Church Hamburg.

Robby Sherman is now serving as the associational missionary for Little River Baptist Association.

George Shipman is now serving as pastor at Bethel Baptist Church in Mena.

Joe Thibeau is now serving as pastor at Hatton Baptist Church in Hatton.

Baptist life

Calvary Baptist Church in Little Rock will be hosting the Annual Arkansas State Handbell Festival March 8-9.

Wild Game Expo set for March 2 at Cabot High

CABOT - Mount Carmel Baptist Church, Cabot, and First Baptist Church, Cabot, will host the second annual Cabot Wild Game Expo at Cabot High School March 2.

"This is a nonprofit, outdoor ministry that exists to spread the love of Jesus in our community," said David Mitchell, senior pastor at Mount Carmel Baptist.

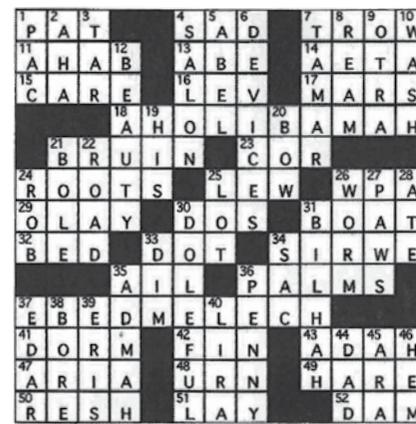
The expo is a one-day event featuring a vendor fair, door

prizes, a silent auction, grand prize drawings and activities for children. Bubbas BBQ will cater the event.

Scott Porter, founder of Trophies of Grace, will speak at the expo and will display the ministry's trophy whitetail deer.

"What is God-honoring and unique is that we have two churches joining forces in this ministry," said Terry Bostick, senior pastor at First Baptist.

Crossword key, see crossword page 14



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■ **Houseparents:**
Baptist Ranch, Harrison.
This full-time position includes salary, housing, medical and life insurance and paid leave. **Contact:** Roger Langlie at (870) 741-5784 or rlanglie@arkansasfamilies.org.

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Classifieds

PASTOR

Steel Bridge Baptist Church, a strong rural church, with all new and debt-free facilities is seeking a **bi-vocational or possible full-time pastor**. Send resumes to 1214 Hwy 315, Lonoke, AR 72086.

First Baptist Church McGehee, AR, is seeking a **full-time pastor**. Please mail resumes to: Pastor Search Committee, First Baptist Church McGehee, P.O. Box 133, McGehee, AR 71654 or email resumes to: jonie_massey@yahoo.com. You may also include a sermon DVD or a link to a sermon video/audio. Deadline is March 15, 2019.

FBC in Senath, MO (www.senathfirstbaptist.org), is seeking a **full-time pastor**. Please send resumes to Box 177, Senath, MO, 63876 or by email to fbcsenath@gmail.com.

Faith Southern Baptist Church is seeking a **bi-vocational pastor**. Submit applications to P.O. Box 273, Huntsville, AR 72740. Applications will be accepted through March 1, 2019. For more information, contact 479-738-2487.

Witt's Chapel Baptist Church in Maynard, AR, is seeking a **pastor**. Send resumes and references to: David Byers, 1340 Legate Road, Maynard, AR 72444.

Bigelow Baptist Church, Bigelow, AR, is seeking a **bi-vocational pastor**. Please send resumes to brandonrakridge@gmail.com.

First Baptist Church, Hector, is seeking a **bi-**

vocational pastor. Send resume to 801 East 16th Street, Russellville, AR 72801, or email: arvba@suddenlink.net.

East Side Baptist Church, Paragould, AR, is seeking a **full-time senior pastor**. Please mail resumes to: Pastor Search Committee, East Side Baptist Church, 529 E. Court Street, Paragould, AR 72450, or mail resumes to: brichey@connect2eastside.com. You may also include a sermon DVD or a link to a sermon video/audio.

Victory Baptist Church, Back Gate, AR, is seeking a **full-time pastor**. Please send resumes to: pastorsearch@vbcbackgate.com.

Mountain Top Cowboy Church, Heber Springs, is searching for a **full-time senior pastor**. Mail resume to the Pastor Search Committee, 45 Heber Springs Rd., Heber Springs, AR 72543, or go online to www.mountaintopcowboychurch.com and click on "Pastor Search" for more information.

OTHER STAFF POSITIONS

FBC Siloam Springs, AR, is seeking God's will for a **F/T salaried youth pastor**, licensed (preferably ordained) and Southern Baptist. Please send your resume to FBC Youth Pastor Search Committee, 2000 Dawn Hill Road, Siloam Springs, AR 72761 or email to searchteam@fbciloam.com.

South Side Baptist Church, Damascus, AR, is seeking a **full-time student minister**.

Send resume to ssbc0809@gmail.com or 153 Sulphur Road, Damascus, AR 72039.

Otter Creek Community Church seeking **part-time minister of music**. Send resume to info@theocchurch.com.

West Baptist, Batesville is searching for a **full-time pastor to students**. Mail resumes to 1100 N. Central Ave., Batesville, AR 72501 or send to pastorclmaj.west@gmail.com.

Rocky Point Baptist Church is seeking **part-time youth minister**. If interested, please send resumes to Bryan Webb, 642 Hwy 258, Bald Knob, AR 72010.

Carey Baptist Association is receiving resumes for the position of **director of missions**. Send to David Dillard, 114 Highway 9, Sparkman, AR 71763. They should be received by March 11.

Cedar Heights Baptist Church in North Little Rock, AR, is seeking a **part-time children's minister**. Please send resumes to jobs@chbcnrl.com or visit chbcnrl.com.

Ebenezer Baptist Church, El Dorado, AR, is receiving resumes for a **part-time minister of youth** with more responsibilities during the summer. Please send resume to: Youth Minister Search Committee, Ebenezer Baptist Church, 1942 North Wyatt Dr., El Dorado, AR 71730.

Sheridan First Baptist is seeking a **part-time student minister**. Looking for someone to plan and implement a comprehensive program of Christian development for students

in an already established 7th-12th grade student ministry program. Send resume to pwest@windstream.net.

Mountain Springs Baptist Church, a growing, dynamic church in Cabot is seeking a **praise team leader** to lead a blended worship service. If interested, please contact Jeremy Holley at 501-681-4983.

Glendale Baptist Church, Booneville, is seeking a **full-time minister to students**. To inquire further or submit a resume, email stu.min@glendalebc.org.

Judsonia FBC is in search of a **full-time pastor of youth/education director**; salary set at \$50,000. Please send resumes to fbjud@gmail.com or call (501) 729-3336.

Cedar Heights Baptist Church in North Little Rock, AR, is seeking a **part-time associate youth minister**. Please send resumes to jobs@chbcnrl.com or visit chbcnrl.com.

Maple Avenue Baptist Church of Smackover, AR, is seeking a **P/T student minister**. If interested, please call 870-310-5508 or email benmc@mapleavenuebc.com.

Woodland Heights, Conway is seeking a **full-time student pastor for 7th-12th grades**. Looking for a strong leader to reach students and equip them for ministry. Experience and a theology degree preferred. Send resume to resumes@whbconway.org.

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MISCELLANEOUS

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Pastor celebrates 35 years at First Baptist, Eagle Mills

Sarah Davis
Arkansas Baptist News

CAMDEN – “I never had any idea that I would be a preacher. I love the Lord and all, but I never dreamed that I would be a preacher,” said Chris Morgan.

Morgan, known as the Preaching Fisherman of White Oak Lake, celebrated 35 years as pastor of First Baptist Church, Eagle Mills, Jan. 26.

“He is a pastor by the truest sense of the word,” said Jody Tillery, associate pastor of First Baptist. “He loves preaching the Word, and he is faithful to be anywhere when there is a need.”

Becoming a pastor was never on Morgan’s mind. He worked for Gilchrist Bag Company to provide for his family. His hobbies included fishing and teaching himself to play the piano.

However, Morgan’s life changed one Sunday morning at Elliott Baptist Church, Camden.

“I was singing in the choir, and the Lord spoke to me about becoming a preacher,” said Morgan. “At first, I thought He was talking to somebody else.”

Morgan stepped out in faith and surrendered to the ministry.

“Of course, it took my wife by surprise. She had no idea that I would be called as a pastor,” said Morgan.

He preached his first sermon at Elliott Baptist and supplied pulpits for about two years before getting a call from First Baptist. The dying church asked Morgan to fill its pulpit.

“During that time, they called me to be their pastor,” said Morgan. “I told them I would pray about it for a couple of weeks because I wanted

500 in the congregation, not five.”

Within the first week of prayer, God led Morgan to accept the call.

“The Lord let me know that I better take five because I didn’t deserve 500,” Morgan said.

In 1984, Morgan became bi-vocational pastor at Eagle Mills. Over the next 35 years, the congregation grew from five to around 125.

“I have observed Bro. Chris for the past 34 years as we have pastored churches in the same association,” said Don Phillips, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Camden. “He loves the Lord and loves people. He

has built a strong church that lifts up Jesus.”

Tillery, who was saved and surrendered to the ministry under Morgan’s leadership, notes the strong influence Morgan has provided in his life.

“God has put me in a place to be groomed by one of the best men I have ever known,” said Tillery. “He has taught me more about loving God and loving people than anyone can imagine.”

Dave King, a member at First Baptist for nearly 30 years, said Morgan’s love for people makes him a good pastor.

“When I think of a pastor,

I think of someone that really is a shepherd to the people, and he is definitely that,” said King. “He preaches the Word of God and doesn’t compromise.”

Several years ago, Morgan tried to resign as pastor of First Baptist to allow the church to find a new pastor, but the church refused to let him go.

“I’m glad God called me to be a pastor, and I’m glad that I followed the calling,” said Morgan. “It’s been such a blessing to be at Eagle Mills. The people are great, and they love the Lord.”

Contact Sarah Davis at sarah@arkansasbaptist.org.



Morgan

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Executive Director, Arkansas Baptist State Convention

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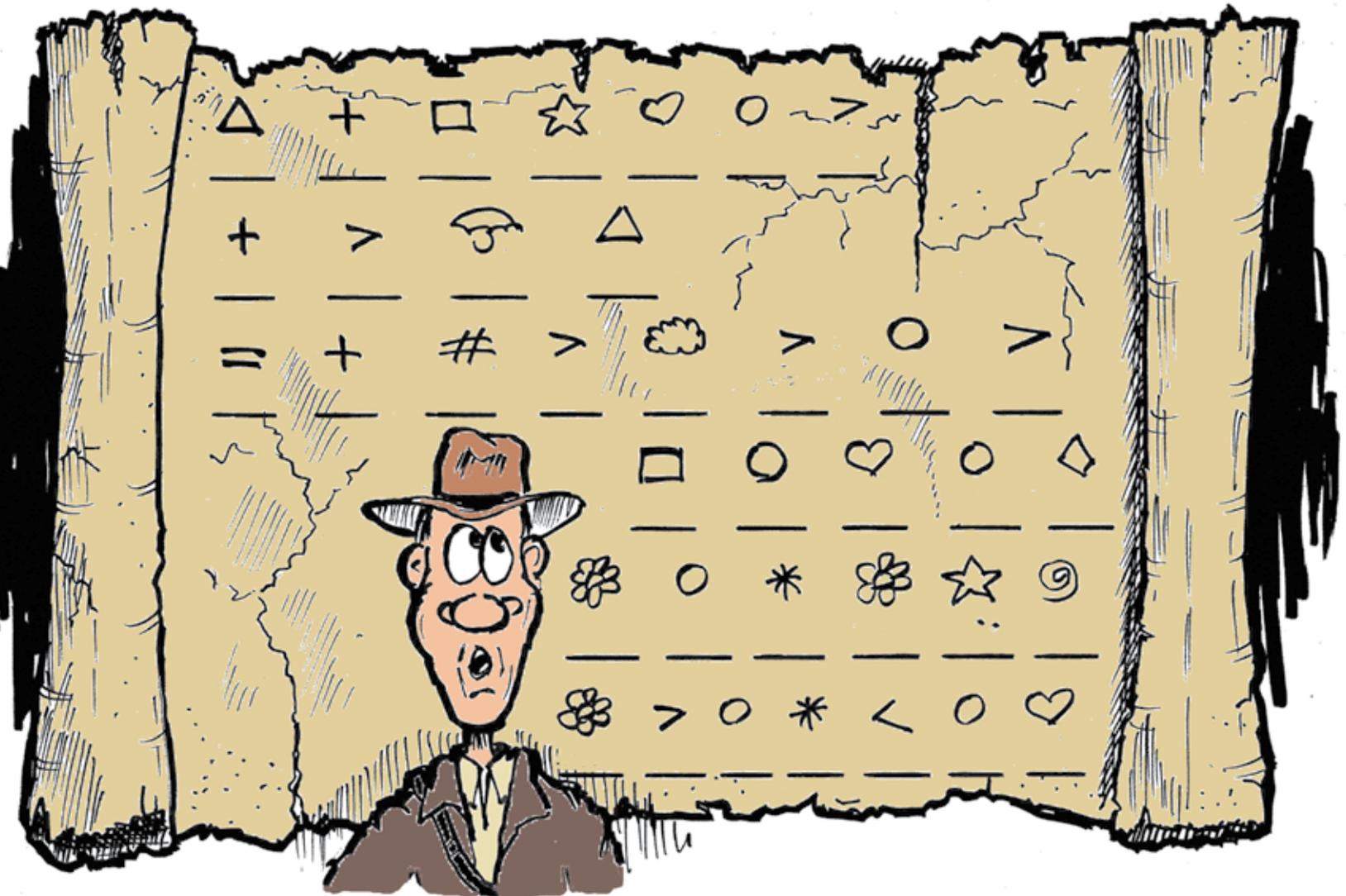
"An athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules."

2 Timothy 2:5 (CSB)

USE THE CODE BELOW TO DISCOVER THESE FAMOUS OLD TESTAMENT JUDGES

- O - A
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- △ - D
- + - E
- ∩ - G
- ∨ - H
- = - C
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- ⊙ - N
- ☆ - O
- # - P
- ♥ - R
- ☼ - S
- ☁ - T
- ☂ - U

CTHOMAS



Across

1. Butter unit
4. "with lies ye made the heart of the righteous ____" (Ezekiel 13:22)
7. "Doth he thank that servant...? I ____ not" (Luke 17:9)
11. Naboth couldn't stand in his way
13. Mary Todd's fiance, to friends
14. Luzon native
15. Worry
16. O.T. bk.
17. ____ Hill, "pulpit" of Paul
18. A wife of Esau (Genesis 36)
21. Fabled bear
23. "offer the tenth of a bath out of the ____" (Ezekiel 45:14)
24. "he overturneth the mountains by the ____" (Job 28:9)
25. Actor Ayres
26. FDR program
29. Part of cosmetics brand name
30. Two (Sp.)
31. "Jesus went not with his disciples into the ____" (John 6:22)

32. "Arise, take up thy ____" (Matthew 9:6)
33. Period
34. "____ would see Jesus" (John 12:21)
35. Feel poorly
36. "I have graven thee upon the ____ of my hands" (Isaiah 49:16)
37. He intercedes with King Zedekiah for Jeremiah (Jeremiah 38, 39)
41. Where coed "crashes"
42. ____ de siècle
43. One of Lamech's wives (Genesis 4)
47. Operatic solo
48. Footed vase
49. An unclean "beast" (Leviticus 11)
50. Hebrew letter
51. "The Son of man hath not where to ____ his head" (Luke 9:58)
52. Hoover ____

Down

1. Type of moccasin

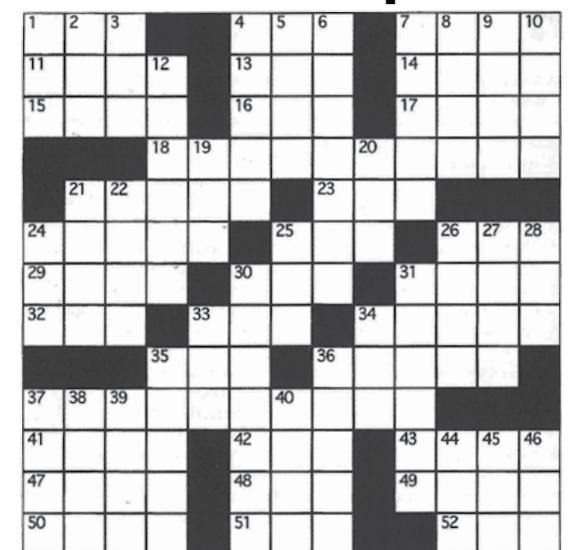
2. Exclamation
3. ____adiddle (Brit., a fib)
4. Reception hall
5. By his action, "he being dead yet speaketh" (Hebrews 11:4)
6. "He disappointeth the ____ of the crafty" (Job 5:12)
7. Absalom's sister (2 Samuel 13)
8. 500 sheets of paper
9. Other (Sp.)
10. "____ me thoroughly from mine iniquity" (Psalm 51:2)
12. "array thyself with glory and ____" (Job 40:10)
19. Pronoun
20. Early movie star
21. Tree trunk
22. "Ehither have ye made a ____ today?" (1 Samuel 27:10)
24. "____ not the poor" (Proverbs 22:22)
25. Abraham's nephew
26. "Neither was there any ____ there-in" (Exodus 16:24)
27. Handles clumsily"

28. Chewed
30. "lament with a ____ lamentation" (Micah 2:4)
31. Handmaid of Rachel (Genesis 30)
33. Poorly lit
34. Pouch
35. One of the fenced cities of Naphtali (Joshua 19)
36. Woman's nickname
37. "Israel...spread his tend beyond the town of ____" (Genesis 35:21)
38. "His master shall ____ his ear through" (Exodus 21:6)
39. Belonging to the head of the Erites
40. What to fork over in Firenze
44. Father
45. A son of Jether (1 Chronicles 7)
46. Search for right word

Crossword by Barbour Publishing, Inc.

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ABN Crossword puzzle



Crossword answer key on page 12

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MARCH 3, 2019

Often, new ministries are launched with much fanfare and production. However, Jesus began His ministry in the Judean wilderness in solitude.

John was preparing people for the coming of the Messiah. Jesus obediently submitted to John's baptism, not because He was a sinner but because He identified with sinful humanity (Mark 1:9). This was a fulfillment of prophecy (Mark 1:15). When Jesus was coming out of the water, the Spirit descended upon Him like a dove, and His Father spoke His affirmation from heaven, "You are My beloved Son; I take delight in You!" (Mark 1:11). This was the inauguration of Jesus' public ministry.

After Jesus' baptism, the Spirit led Jesus to the rugged wasteland of the wilderness for 40 days of solitude and fasting. It was there that Satan showed up and tempted Jesus. The battle for the souls of humanity experienced during that interaction continued all the way to the cross. Jesus had victory over the temptations and the tempter because He truly is the Son of God.

Jesus began preaching His message in Galilee. He said, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe in the good news!" (Mark 1:15). John had already been preaching repentance, but Jesus added, "Believe." It was only by repenting from sin and believing in the good news that

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Calls

MARK 1:9-20 (HCSB)

they would enter the kingdom. The good news is the gospel of Jesus Christ.

In Mark 1:16-20, Jesus called His first disciples. Down by the sea, Jesus called Simon and Andrew to follow Him. They would "fish for people" (Mark 1:17). He then called James and his brother John while they were tending nets (Mark 1:19). As soon as He called them, they left their nets and followed Him (Mark 1:20).

Jesus calls all of us to believe the gospel, to leave our nets and to follow Him without compromise. His demands are great, but His blessings are much greater.

In a Peanuts comic strip I once read, Linus was working diligently to build an elaborate sand castle on the beach. A few frames later, it began to rain, with the rain eventually becoming so heavy that the sand castle was completely washed out. Linus remarked, "There is a lesson to be learned here, but I don't know what it is." I believe the lesson is: "the futility of human toil."

Solomon said, "Absolute futility. Everything is futile" (Eccl. 1:2). The New King James Version says, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." Solomon used this word 38 times. The Hebrew word for "vanity" is translated as "vapor." So "vanity of vanities" is translated "vapor of vapors." Charles Swindoll translated it in more modern terms as "a puff of wind." Solomon described his journey in the world as "a pursuit of the wind" (Eccl. 1:14, 17).

Solomon's grim outlook needed perspective. He asked, "What does a man gain for all his efforts he labors at under the sun?" (Eccl. 1:3). Solomon had an

"under-the-sun" or a strictly human perspective. On his journey through life, he left God out of the picture.

Because he left God out of the picture, all his efforts were pointless, wearisome and non-satisfying, and he found there was nothing new. Solomon boiled life down to a miserable task of chasing the wind.

Solomon chased after things in the world and came up empty; so will we.

Although Christ is not mentioned in the Book of Ecclesiastes, as believers we need to have a New Testament

perspective as we apply each lesson from Ecclesiastes to our lives. We need to understand there is an "above-the-sun" or a heavenly perspective. Jesus came that we might have an abundant life (John 10:10). Life is not in vain if it is lived according to the will of God rather than the way of the world. Rather than chasing after the things of the world, we should seek God first and then all the things we need will be provided (Matt. 6:33).

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

When life feels empty

ECCLESIASTES 1:1-14 (HCSB)

MARCH 10, 2019

I once witnessed to a couple who shared their story with me. They spoke of lives lived for self, lives of every imaginable sin. They thought they were beyond forgiveness and bound for hell. I told them that God could, and would, forgive them if only they would ask.

Daniel Akin, president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, said, "At some point in our lives, we will be forced to consider two critical questions: 1) Can I be forgiven of my sins?, and 2) Who can forgive me of my sins? We are all sinners in need

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Forgiven

MARK 2:1-12 (HCSB)

of forgiveness. Our sin separates us from God and leaves us spiritually dead. Jesus has the authority to forgive sins and to give us spiritual life.

Many had gathered in a small house to listen to Jesus' teaching. There was standing room only. There were some men who brought their paralytic friend in hopes of having him healed. However, there was no way into the house, so they lowered their friend on a stretcher down through the roof. Jesus was impressed

with their faith and said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven" (Mark 2:5). We should note that the man probably did not come to Jesus to have his sins forgiven but, rather, for healing. Ultimately he received both.

The scribes thought Jesus was blasphemous because only God could forgive sins (Mark 2:7). Jesus knew what they were thinking. He asked them which was easier: to forgive the man's sins or heal his body. Jesus told the paralytic, "Get up, pick up your mat, and go home" (Mark 2:11). The man got up, picked up the stretcher, and left. Everyone gave glory to God.

The scribes were correct; only God can forgive sin. Jesus is the Son of God Who takes away the sins of the world. This is man's greatest need. Why did He heal the man? He told us, "So you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins" (Mark 2:10). This is the message we need to share with others. Jesus can and will forgive people of their sins.

In a class I took with Harvard University's famed professor Michael J. Sandel, he asked, "In the pursuit of the good life, how do we know what to do?" One young man said, "If it feels good, do it." This seems to be the mantra of our culture. Much has been written about the pursuit of the good life. With 7.3 billion people on the planet, one can imagine how many definitions of "good" exist. Our perception of the good life will dictate how we pursue it.

Solomon pursued the good life. He said to himself, "I will test you with pleasure; enjoy what is good" (Eccl. 2:1). In Solomon's pursuit of the good life, he experimented with laughter and wine. Perhaps he had a great banquet with many entertainers, lots of folly and lots of wine. When the party was over, he examined his heart, only to find that he was dissatisfied and empty. His conclusion: "But it turned out to be futile" (Eccl. 2:1).

Solomon turned his attention to the pursuit of all kinds of projects (Eccl. 2:4-

10). The Old Testament record that Solomon started many projects, including houses, cities, gardens, vineyards, forests, water systems and that he supervised the construction of the temple. He acquired workers, including slaves he purchased and those born to his household. He accumulated great wealth in the form of flocks, herds, gold and silver. The richest man in the world looked over all he had done and all he had acquired, and he said, "I found everything to be futile and a pursuit of the wind" (Eccl. 2:11).

Solomon wasn't condemning work and wealth. Life "under the sun" without "principles above the sun" is non-satisfying and empty. Solomon, like the young man from Harvard, lived with the philosophy, "If it feels good, do it." The problem is that, without godly principles, good feelings can lead to wrong actions. Worldly pursuits without godly principles will blind us to what is really good and what is really important.

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

The problem with pleasure

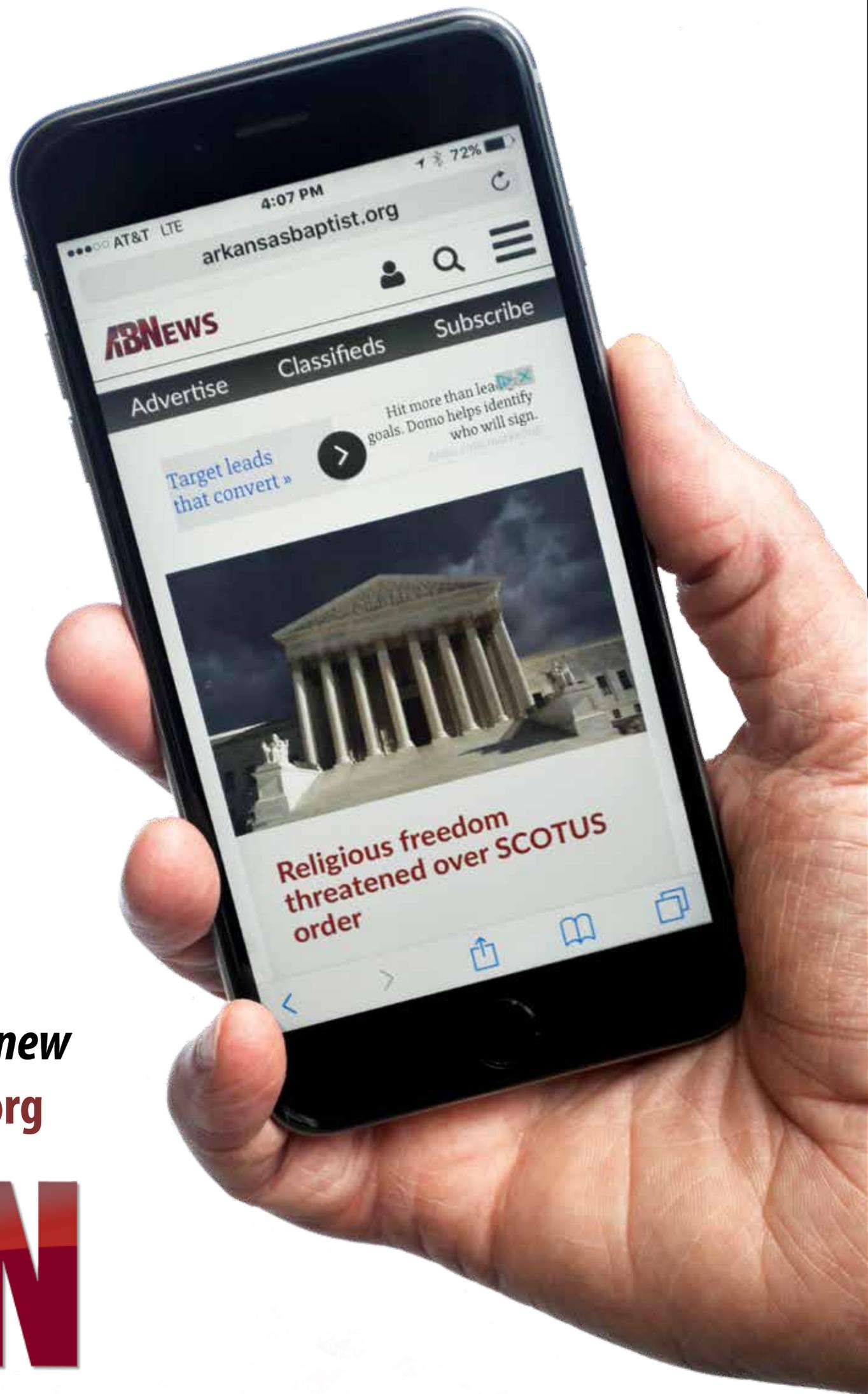
ECCLESIASTES 2:1-11 (HCSB)

Featured commentary writer



Gerald Nash

Gerald Nash is a registered respiratory therapist and EEG technician at St. Mary's Regional Health System in Russellville. He is involved in medical research, determining antibiotic resistance in tuberculosis. Nash leads a small group and is involved in many ministries at Second Baptist Church, Conway. He has attended several universities and seminaries, including Williams Baptist University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. His degrees include a bachelor of arts in Christian ministries, master of arts and doctor of ministry in pastoral studies, and master of arts in theological studies. He is currently studying archaeology and paleography and volunteers on the Cairo Geniza Project, deciphering and analyzing ancient Greek and Arabic documents. Nash enjoys reading, bass fishing and spending time with his family. He and his wife, Mary Ann, love to travel, explore ancient ruins and go on wild animal safaris.



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