



ABSC conf. encourages Ark. Baptists

SHERWOOD – Hundreds of evangelists, pastors and members of Arkansas Baptist churches gathered Jan. 27-28 to pray and to be encouraged through inspiring messages at the 2014 State Conference on Evangelism and Church Growth held at First Baptist Church, Sherwood.

Reaching Arkansas for Christ was the theme of the conference, which was preceded by the Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC) prayer leader workshop led by “Experiencing God” author Henry Blackaby.

Terry Bostick, team leader of the ABSC evangelism and church growth team, said the event was “Spirit-filled” event.

“The worship team from Cross Church did an amazing job, our guest speakers were passionate and on-target, our attendees came ready to worship and God’s presence was experienced by those in attendance,” said Bostick, who was leading the event for the first time after joining the ABSC in 2013.

“This year was more than just a conference – it was a Spirit-filled worship experience,” he said. “Even some of our speakers commented to me that they felt the Spirit of God moving. We were all blessed. (I would like to thank) First Baptist, Sherwood, for offering a facility so favorable for an awesome worship experience. I can hardly wait until next year.”

See **EVANGELISM** page 6



Robert Smith (above), professor of Christian preaching at Beeson Divinity School in Birmingham, Ala., speaks during the Arkansas Baptist State Convention State Conference on Evangelism and Church Growth, held Jan. 27-28 at First Baptist Church, Sherwood. Audience members (left) stand for the reading of God’s Word at the conference. *Photos by ABN staff*

Flu season hits Arkansas, churches hard

FLU SEASON has taken Arkansas by storm, with numerous deaths reported and churches experiencing declining attendance.

Influenza activity in the U.S. remained high during the week of Jan. 12-18 according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s FluView, a weekly influenza surveillance report prepared by the influenza division.

According to the FluView report, the U.S. Outpatient Influenza-like Illness Surveillance Network (ILI-

Net) reported that, nationwide during the week of Jan. 12-18, 3.4 percent of outpatient visits were due to influenza-like illness (ILI), which is higher than the national baseline of 2.0 percent. ILI is defined as a fever and a cough and/or sore throat. ILINet data indicated that Arkansas was among states experiencing high ILI activity, according to the report.

Arkansas Baptists are among those who have been affected by the flu this season.

“As associational secretary in Mis-

issippi County, I am receiving word from our churches, large and small, that attendance has been greatly affected this year by the flu, as well as bronchitis, and a pretty wicked virus has been going around as well,” said Denise Storey, ministry assistant and office manager for Mississippi County Baptist Association in Blytheville.

Not only have churches experienced declining attendance,

See **FLU** page 3

PROFILES IN FAITH

Ruth Maynard teaches Christ for half a century

THOSE DEDICATED to the Lord’s work come in all shapes and sizes; and the ways they serve are just as varied. One of the areas of Ruth Maynard’s service was teaching Sunday school, which she did for more than half a century.

In 2013, Concord Baptist Church, Van Buren, honored her upon her retirement from teaching Sunday school.

She taught for about 60 years, about half of which were spent teaching at Concord Baptist Church. Prior to Concord Baptist, she taught at Kibler Baptist Church, Alma.

Through the years, she taught all ages – from children to senior adults.

Her most recent class was a married couples class at Concord Baptist.

“What has been really neat about her is out of her married couples class, many Sunday school teachers and other church workers have grown out of that class. So she was not just teaching Sunday school, but training teachers and training church workers. And through the years, that’s kind of been her modus operandi,”



Maynard

said Dale Walker, pastor of Concord Baptist Church.

He said Maynard’s class kept her as their teacher as long as they could.

“That’s another sign of her class’s love for her and her impact on them,” he said.

Tara Smith, Maynard’s oldest grandchild and a member of Concord Baptist, said Maynard always strove to continue learning and kept notebooks full of handwritten notes from various preachers, teachers and Bible studies. Then,

she would use those to write her own lessons for her Sunday school class.

“Everyone loved to go to Granny’s class because it wasn’t cut-and-dried,” Smith said. “She learned the history of why things were done certain ways, so you got so many added details.”

Rick Green, now a member of First Baptist Church, Van Buren, was in Maynard’s Sunday school class when she taught at Kibler Baptist Church.

“Without a doubt, Ruth

See **MAYNARD** page 3

Blackaby tells Ark. Baptists: 'Live the Lord's Prayer'

Tim Yarbrough
Arkansas Baptist News

SHERWOOD - "Experiencing God" author Henry Blackaby used Jesus' reciting of the Lord's Prayer to His disciples in Matthew 6:5-13 as an example how Christians should pray and "live their lives."

Blackaby led a prayer workshop Jan. 27 prior to the start of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC) State Conference on Evangelism and Church Growth at First Baptist Church, Sherwood.

After reading the Lord's Prayer, Blackaby said, "It is up to us to live it out, not simply to read it."

Earlier, Blackaby encouraged all present to "live as a disciple of Jesus."

"When God gets ahold of a life, there is no limit what he (the person) can do."

Blackaby asked attendees when someone hears their name, "What do they think about your character?"

The internationally known prayer leader asked how seriously those in attendance take Jesus' charge to take the gospel to every creature.

"Are you taking seriously the commands of Christ?" Blackaby asked.

"The Lord's Prayer is an important revelation into the heart of God."

In a unique move, Blackaby opened up the floor of the large First Baptist sanctuary to a brief Q-and-A time.

A woman in the audience said she sometimes has difficulty knowing if she is doing what God wants her to do and asked how to know for sure that she is doing the right thing.

Blackaby encouraged the woman to stay close to voice of the Holy Spirit and to "watch carefully what God is doing in your life."

In response to another question about the role of prayer in the church, Blackaby said it is important for church leaders to take public prayer seriously.

Responding to a question about church revitalization, he said, "Prayer is essential to revitalization. How you speak to the church is vital," adding, "Teach the people carefully and specifically and use the Word of God (in prayer)."

Blackaby said it is essential a church knows their pastor is a person of prayer.

"The people need to see that prayer is real and vital in



Henry Blackaby, author of "Experiencing God," uses Christ's reciting of the Lord's Prayer to His disciples in Matthew 6 as an example of how Christians should pray and "live their lives."

your life," he said.

At one point, Blackaby's wife, Marilyn, joined him on the platform to share about the role of prayer during his recent illness that included his brief disappearance, heart attack and heart bypass surgery.

"Prayer is the most important part of your life," she said, adding that during the hours of Blackaby's disappearance, the family - including grandchildren - gathered to pray.

She said God gave them "peace that nothing horrible had happened."

Marilyn Blackaby said she led the family in prayer, expressing "anticipation of God revealing Himself once again."

Blackaby's appearance at the ABSC prayer workshop was one of his first public speaking engagements since his heart surgery.

Contact Tim Yarbrough at tim@arkansasbaptist.org.

Stockert new campus minister at Arkansas State University

JONESBORO - Jerome Stockert, of Bossier City, La., will be the new campus minister at Arkansas State University (ASU) in Jonesboro. Stockert was hired during a meeting of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC) Operating Committee Jan. 16.



Stockert

Stockert, a native of North Dakota, moved to Arkansas

following high school to attend ASU on a track and field athletic scholarship. Stockert met his wife, Andrea, while at ASU. They have been married for 22 years and have three children, Caleb, 16, Kaitlyn, 16, and Callie, 14.

Previously, Stockert served as a church planter for the Northwest Louisiana Baptist Association in Shreveport,

La., pastor of Ethnos Community Church in Bossier City, La., and associate director of the Baptist Collegiate Ministry (BCM) at Bossier Parish Community College, Bossier City, La., and the BCM at Centenary College, Shreveport, La.

"Jerome and his wife Andrea are graduates of ASU and value BCM on a personal level. Doing campus ministry in Arizona, Pennsylvania and Louisiana gives Jerome a broad

perspective and insight that will mean much to the ASU collegiate community and to our state as a whole," said David James, ABSC collegiate ministry team leader.

"Jerome's salvation and early spiritual growth was a direct result of BCM and churches in the Jonesboro area. He knows the importance of consistent, loving and intentional sharing of the gospel. I am grateful to have him on staff," said James.

Article in ABN leads donor to Ark. Baptist Foundation

LITTLE ROCK - He was a native of Illinois, a retired education professor who spent 23 years teaching at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV), and a fan of fine art and healthy diets. John Warren was one-of-a-kind and certainly not your average Arkansas Baptist.

Warren died in Little Rock on Dec. 3 following a bout with cancer. He was 82.

After retiring from UNLV in 1994, Warren decided to relocate to Mountain Home, close to where his distant cousins, his last living relatives, resided.

In 1995, while reading the *Arkansas Baptist*, now the *Arkansas Baptist News*, Warren read an article about the work of the Arkansas Baptist Foundation (ABF). He was unaware until reading the piece that the Foundation could provide him with financial services and act as his

executor, trustee and power of attorney agent. Warren called the Foundation, set up a meeting and ended up having the organization handle his affairs.

After living in Mountain Home for several years, Warren moved to Springfield, Mo., where he was active at First Baptist Church. In recent years, with his health in decline, Warren had the Foundation move him to Little Rock to an assisted living facility.

Following his death, the Foundation handled Warren's final business. His estate, including a collection of valuable coins, furniture and oriental rugs, was auctioned, money was provided to support Baptist World Alliance and scholarships were established at Ouachita Baptist College, Williams Baptist College and Missouri Baptist College in St. Louis, Mo., all per his request.



SPARK OF LIFE - Willie and Korie Robertson, of "Duck Dynasty" fame, visited Little Rock Jan. 18 to share stories about their faith and family. The couple spoke as part of a fundraising event for Spark of Life, a grief counseling ministry based in Searcy. Photo by Caleb Yarbrough

While most of Warren's life was spent outside of Arkansas, his connection with Arkansas Baptists, as well as his passion for education, will be remembered through the scholarships he established at the two Southern Baptist colleges in Arkansas.

According to David Moore,

president of the Arkansas Baptist Foundation, the story of John Warren is a great example of the great importance of cooperation between Arkansas Baptist agencies and the lasting impact each one of the agencies can have on the lives of both nonbelievers and believers across Arkansas.

Ministers' wives gather for laughter, love

LITTLE ROCK – A special time was set aside during the Arkansas Baptist State Convention 2014 State Conference on Evangelism and Church Growth for ministers' wives from across Arkansas to come together and fellowship.

The event, which took place during one of the conference breaks, was called "LuLu" – which stands for "laughter unending, love unconditional."

The event was hosted by the Ministers' Wives Network with help from the women's ministry of First Baptist Church, Sherwood.

Vicki Lee, whose husband –

Ricky Lee – is pastor of First Baptist, organized the LuLu event.

"Our goal was for them (the women) to come in and fellowship and ... laugh and love on one another," said Lee, who serves on the Ministers' Wives Network leadership team.

Katie Franklin, wife of Brad Franklin, associate pastor of children at First Baptist, attended the LuLu event and said she enjoyed it.

"I think it was a good way to meet some new people and some people that are around here that you can connect with and make friends," she said.

Julie Beavers, whose husband, Stephen, is church planter/pastor at Delta Baptist Church, Pine Bluff, also serves on the Ministers' Wives Network leadership team, she explained the purpose of the network, saying the goal is to connect Arkansas ministers' wives to each other "so that we can encourage and love and fellowship with them in good times and in bad."

Lee and Beavers are available to offer encouragement to ministers' wives or to help associations set up a group for ministers' wives.

For more information, email minwife@gmail.com.

MAYNARD

continued from page one

Maynard was one of the strongest influences on my life," Green said. "I have always referred to Ruth as one of the greatest storytellers and verbal illustrators of God's Word of this century. She had a way of mentally transporting you to a biblical event of old and made the Word of God come alive.

"She opened her home to all young people who craved to hear more of God's teachings and gave wise counsel to young teens as they struggled against the pressures of the world around them. One of my greatest joys was just sitting at her feet or around her kitchen table over a slice of cake and listening to her pour her heart out for her love for Jesus and His sacrifices."

In 1946, Maynard married her husband, Bill Maynard, whom Smith said always supported his wife in God's work.

"He always said that he enjoyed watching people – old and young – sit at her feet while she told them about God," Smith said.

They were married for 65 years before he died in 2011. Ruth Maynard currently lives in an assisted living retirement center.

Not only did Maynard teach Sunday school, but for many years, she taught at Baptist Vista Camp, the Clear Creek Baptist Association's camp, and ran the camp bookstore. Maynard also sang in



Ruth Maynard leads her great-grandson, Alex Smith, to Christ in March 2011.

choir and taught and directed vacation Bible school (VBS).

And Maynard's influence exceeded the classroom.

"Her door was a revolving door of people coming to learn about God," said Smith, explaining Maynard's children, nieces and nephews would bring friends over when they had questions about the Bible.

"She literally held church at her feet and would get the Bible and tell everybody what it said," Smith said, adding, "She has definitely been a spiritual influence to countless people."

Among those whom Maynard has influenced are her family members. Maynard took her children to church, who in turn took their own children to church. But if there were

ever a service or Bible study Maynard was attending that her children were not, she would offer to take her grandchildren with her.

Maynard's influence on Smith's life has been particularly deep. Smith, who has four children of her own, grew up next door to her grandmother.

Maynard took her everywhere with her – from church camp to vacation Bible school (VBS). She even remembers sitting on part of the pulpit as a young child while Maynard directed VBS.

"Anything I did, I did with her," Smith said. And as a result, Maynard influenced Smith in the type of person she wanted to be.

"She was my role model – not just spiritually, but in everything."

FLU

continued from page one

but their pastors have been affected as well.

Matthew Weaver, senior pastor at South Side Baptist Church, Pine Bluff, reported in a Facebook comment that he missed a recent Sunday service due to illness.

"It is not fun to have this mess," he wrote on Jan. 18. "I was in bed for two straight days. (I'm) just now coming back to the land of the living."

Chris Powers, pastor of Shannon Baptist Church, Pocahontas,

was similarly affected. He shared on Facebook that he and his family missed a Sunday due to the flu and that their church attendance has suffered as well.

An article posted on the Arkansas News Bureau website Jan. 24 reported that state Epidemiologist Dr. Dirk Haselow recently addressed the House and Senate committees on public health, welfare and labor regarding the current flu season in Arkansas. The article reported Haselow as saying that, in Arkansas, the percentages of hospital and doctor visits related to the flu are higher than the normal seasonal levels.

Haselow told the legislative panel that at least 25 deaths have occurred

in Arkansas so far this flu season, the article stated. And while Arkansans of all ages have died, Haselow shared that the unusual aspect is that the average age of those who died was 42 early in the season and 49 more recently. People over the age of 65 usually constitute 80-85 percent of deaths, he said. He added that the number of deaths usually increases late in the season and this season's count could surpass 50. He said there were 61 deaths as a result of last year's flu season.

"We are happy to report at this point we believe we have hit the peak and are starting now on the down side of the flu season," Haselow said in the article.

ABN Digest

Stories of interest to Arkansas Baptists

Abortion ban majority slips in House of Reps

WASHINGTON (BP) – The U.S. House of Representatives has approved a permanent, government wide ban on federal funding of abortion, but with a smaller majority than three years ago. In a Jan. 28 roll call, the House voted 227-188 for the No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act, H.R. 7, which would install a prohibition on both funds and subsidies for abortion. The vote for passage in 2011, however, was 251-175.

ERLC: Mandate violates religious freedoms

WASHINGTON (BP) – The Obama administration's abortion/contraception mandate violates a federal law protecting the religious freedom of for-profit corporations and their owners, the Southern Baptist Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) told the U.S. Supreme Court as part of a friend-of-the-court brief. The ERLC signed on to the brief filed Jan. 28 in support of Hobby Lobby and other family-owned businesses that have conscientious objections to a regulation that requires employers to provide abortion-causing drugs for their workers.

Church input sought for GuideStone survey

DALLAS (BP) – Ministers and church employees are invited to participate in the 2014 SBC Church Compensation Survey, a tool used by churches of all sizes to determine fair wages and benefits. "GuideStone continues to be an advocate for pastors and church staff, ensuring that they are compensated fairly," said O.S. Hawkins, president of GuideStone Financial Resources. "That's why we partner with LifeWay Christian Resources and Baptist state conventions to produce this biannual study." More information is available at www.guidestone.org/CompensationSurvey.

Military brass says, 'No chaplain bias'

WASHINGTON – Lawmakers peppered Pentagon officials on Jan. 29 about claims that military chaplains have faced discrimination for their beliefs, with chaplains and personnel officials repeatedly saying they are unaware of any bias.

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

Sewage disguised as entertainment

Recently, while my daughter was home for Christmas break from the University of Arkansas, I got a call.

"Dad, there is something weird coming out of our faucets! I'm afraid we might have a broken pipe!"

"Honey, what does it look like?" I asked, expecting the worst with temperatures in central Arkansas dipping into the teens for the first time this winter.

"It's running brown out of every faucet! What should I do?" she exclaimed.

"I'll be right there!" I told her, surmising it didn't sound to me like a broken pipe ... and hoping and praying that it wasn't.

As it turns out, the silt was due to a frozen pipe not at our house, but somewhere along the supply route to our house. The water company said a supply line had frozen and was dumping "harmless" silt and sludge into the system. Residents in Maumelle and North Little Rock were experiencing the same

"brown" water.

The problem was fixed later in the day, and by the next day or two, the lines were running clear.

While the water was clear once again, our sinks and tubs had to be thoroughly cleaned to remove residue from the silt.

While my family was quick to notice a change in the quality of water coming into our home, Americans today have been duped into accepting the "dirt" broadcast

PRESSING On

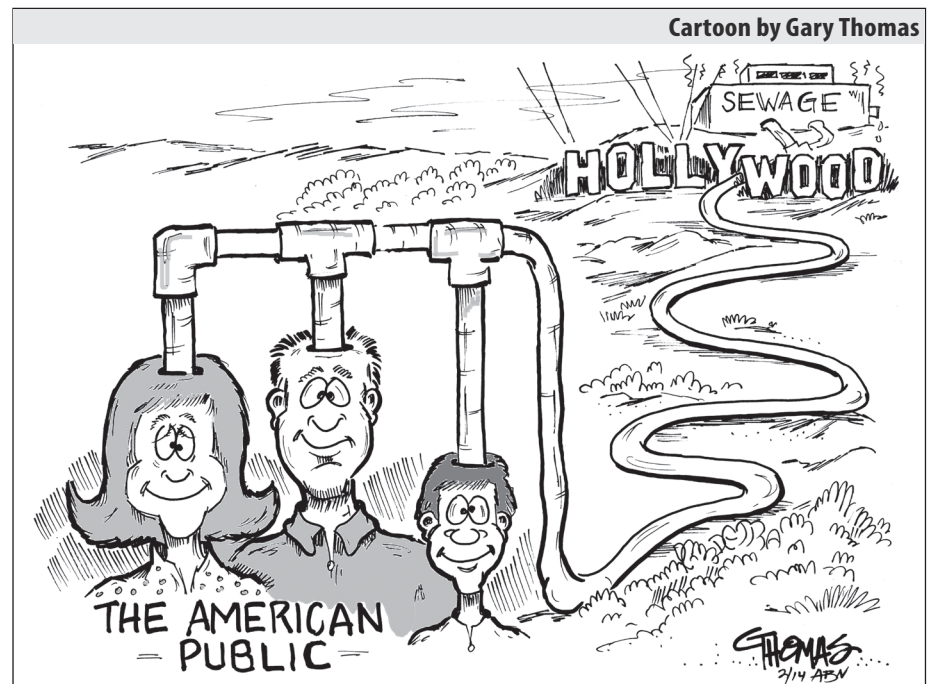
Tim Yarbrough
Phil. 3:14



on our TVs and in the movies as entertainment.

All too common today are TV shows dealing with topics once taboo for earlier generations of Americans. It seems Hollywood and entertainment moguls work overtime to outdo themselves with every new season.

When I was a kid in the early 1970s, I recall a preacher saying in a sermon that one day there would be "naked women and cursing on TV." The preacher shocked many with his prediction at the time, but



we have seen it come to pass.

Of course, we know the one behind such filth – it's none other than Satan, who wants families to consider things like homosexual relationships, drunkenness, premarital sex, abortion and other sinful activities as normal and common behavior for modern people.

As Christians, we know better,

or at least we should. However, it is one thing to know what's right. It is another thing altogether to practice it and teach it to a new generation being bombarded with these messages every day.

We must point the way to wholesome entertainment and model it to others by what we allow into our hearts, minds and homes.

Teach the Text Commentary Series

By R.T. France, edited by Mark L. Strauss and John H. Walton, BakerBooks, 2013

Commentaries. They are the heavy box in every pastoral library, the bent shelf in the church library and the power tool of the Bible student. Like any power tool, the commentary can be overused by those unwilling to do the hard work themselves or underused by those afraid of the power. Commentaries come in a variety of styles, with some being academic and technical but impractical and others being devotional and inspirational but shallow.

Why, then, should you add the Teach the Text Commentary Series to your overlaid shelves? Let us consider R.T. France's volume on the Gospel of Luke as an example of the series. Other

volumes, like Romans by Ouachita Baptist University's C. Marvin Pate, are available and follow a similar format.

First, France's Luke is written with the teacher in mind. Rather than subdividing the text into traditional chapters, France breaks the Gospel of

Luke into teachable segments. This results in 65 sections examining the context and culture of the passage and providing insights on how to teach the material.

Second, France's Luke assumes the reader has a Bible of their own. Rather than reprint the entire text of a passage, the space is used to examine the text. This recognizes

the various translations in use and allows for the teacher or pastor who works from the original languages as well.

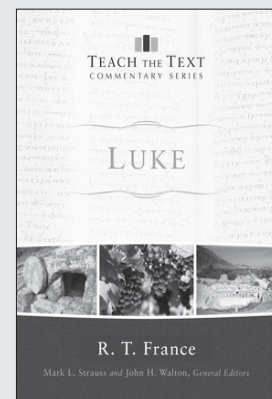
Third, France's Luke is full-color.

I understand why previous generations of book publishing were monochromatic, but with the advent of computer-based printing, the use of color is a reasonable expense. There are shaded boxes to highlight key themes and sections. Then there are full-color photos of artwork, archaeology and architecture that illuminate the theme of the text.

Fourth, France's Luke refers the reader to teaching illustrations for

each segment of text. These may be taken from literature or music, from history or personal life, but they all suggest ways to help the teacher clarify the major message of the passage.

In all these, Luke and other volumes of the Teach the Text series do some of the teacher's heavy-lifting, but not all of it. A good balance is struck between providing background information, linguistic comments, inspirational ideas and then leaving the reader to compile this material with other sources, all to support the most important thing: teaching the text of Scripture. This makes the Teach the Text series a recommended resource for pastors and teachers.



BOOK REVIEW

Doug Hibbard
First Baptist Church, Almyra



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Family Matters

Champion marriage

Have you thought about how to champion marriage in February? Not everyone in your church is married, but everyone in your church is affected by healthy or unhealthy marriages. What if you as a couple or your church added an element of marriage enrichment each year to champion marriage? Here are some strategies:



Phillips

Pray – Encourage couples to pray for and with their spouses. Schedule monthly prayer for married couples in your church. Pair up older couples to pray for younger couples.

Attend – One of the best things you can do for your marriage is attend church. Bradley Wright indicates that the divorce rate among all Christians is 41 percent, but the divorce rate among all Christians who attend church once a week or more is only 32 percent.

Date – Date your spouse consistently. Provide a date night with free child care for couples.

Preach – One church has a message on marriage once a month. While most pastors won't preach on marriage that frequently, it is vital to preach on marriage.

Teach – Provide a marriage series in Sunday school or discipleship training each year. Attend with your spouse.

Retreat – Provide a regular retreat for couples in your church. Attend a marriage retreat with your spouse each year.

Read – Commit to read a book on marriage each year. Provide free books for couples to read in February.

Study – Most couples have a limited knowledge of what the Bible says regarding marriage. Download 31 key Scriptures on marriage at www.absc.org/31keymarriageverses. Memorize a few of these key verses.

Budget – When was the last time your church invested in the marriage of your pastor or staff? Bless those who lead in your church by budgeting for their marriage enrichment on a periodic basis.

Covenant – A covenant marriage requires premarital counseling and lays a foundation that helps prevent divorce. Does your church require covenant marriages?

Ben Phillips leads the Arkansas Baptist State Convention family ministry team.

Love your enemies

Now let's be honest with each other, when you read the title of this article, a name or a face of someone popped into your mind. This is the person at school, work or church whose No. 1 desire it appears is to make your life miserable. They are attacking you physically, emotionally or spiritually. This is the person whom you wish would leave your life and never come back. This is the person that gives you ulcers. This is your enemy. Webster defines an enemy as "one who seeks to injure, overthrow or confound." So, how should we, as Christians, respond to our enemies?

The world teaches that when we are attacked, we should retaliate (attack them). The world says fight fire with fire. The world says if someone hurts you, hurt them back. But what does Jesus say? Jesus said when we are attacked, we should love them (forgive them).

Luke 6:27-28 (NASB) says, "But I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you."

Loving your enemy is like hugging a porcupine – seems impossible. So, how do we love our enemies? First, we have to choose to forgive our enemies. Forgiveness always begins with a choice to forgive. Choose right now to forgive your enemy! Second, begin the process or journey of "forgiving" your enemy. This takes action.

Romans 12:20-21 (NASB) says, "But if your enemy is

hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap burning coals on his head. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."

We, as Christians, cannot wait on our enemies to seek our forgiveness; we must initiate the process of forgiving them by loving them. Take action today to bless your enemy. I know it is easier said than done, but find a way to bless your enemy, and continue to bless your enemy.

How do you know when you have really, truly forgiven your enemy? Here is an example. How would you feel if your enemy, the person who has hurt you or is presently hurting you, won

the Publishers Clearing House Sweepstakes? Would you rejoice? Would you be happy for them? If so, congratulations; if not, remember these words and keep blessing your enemy: Romans 12:14-15 (NASB) says, "Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep."

Make the choice to forgive, and begin the journey today of blessing your enemy; and who knows, tomorrow or next week, you may find yourself set free where you can truly feel, know and say, "I have forgiven my enemy!"

Archie Mason is president of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention and senior pastor of Central Baptist Church in Jonesboro.



PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

Archie Mason

Tough love enabled

A loving mother shared with me about her estranged son. He grew up in church, loved God's Word, accepted Christ into his life and epitomized the perfect child until he moved into his college years. In a wrong group, he soon found his way into a lifestyle unbecoming of a follower of Christ.

With his lifestyle issues, he soon struggled to hold down a job. Periodically, he would make his way home to talk his mother into giving him some money. Then he was off again into his irresponsible way of life. Without realizing it, this mother was enabling him to continue a life of immorality.

In a Bible conference, God convicted her that she was praying for the wrong thing and also enabling the wrong behavior in her son. She had prayed that God would protect him and keep him safe, even during his rebellious years. Soon that prayer became, "God, would You do whatever You need to do to bring my son back into Your fold?"

The next time he came home for money, she explained that the well was dry. He had milked her for the last penny of support he would receive. She explained that he would have to find a way to make it on his own. After all, he was 37 at the time! In an angry

response, he then burst out of the room and out of the house. He would not make contact again with his parents for almost two years.

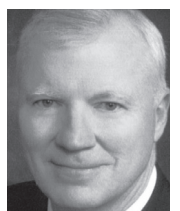
During that time, his mother prayed that God would put obstacles in his path that would force him to turn his heart toward heaven. According to his later testimony, those months were grueling, discouraging and depressive. Nothing seemed to go right for him.

Then, one night in a drunken stupor, he drove out into the country and lost his bearings. After passing out, he woke up and realized that he had no idea where he was. As he began to drive, he saw in the distance a lighted cross on a church that he recognized. That cross,

he said, led him home in more ways than one. His heart soon turned to Jesus for help, and of course, the rest is history. Today, he is a vibrant Christian with a super-excited mother in his life!

Parents need to be careful to use their prayers and their money to always help their children and not enable them in unhealthy ways. This mother shared her story about how she learned that important lesson the hard way.

David Moore is president of the Arkansas Baptist Foundation.



FINANCIAL TIMES

David Moore

The Believer's Daily Challenge

is to make God's invisible blessings visible

Life's not about where we start-up,
Nor the place where we grew-up;
It's possessing, the Lord Jesus we profess
And professing, the Lord Jesus we possess
That determines where we end-up.

Salvation is more precious than gold.
Like integrity, it can't be bought or sold.
It honors Jesus, our Lord and Savior,
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It's the treasure and measure of our soul.

– Robert C. (Bob) Sowell, Hot Springs

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EVANGELISM

continued from page one

At key points throughout the conference, audience members were led in "Arkansas observations" by J.D. "Sonny" Tucker, ABSC executive director; Robby Tingle, ABSC missions ministries team leader, and Bostick. These periods of observation ranged from a time of prayer for revival to reflections on the need for evangelism, church revitalization and prayer.

A number of related meetings also took place, including meetings for ministers' wives, associational missionaries and associational directors of evangelism, student ministers and vocational evangelists.

In addition to Blackaby, other evangelists, pastors and denominational leaders featured at the evangelism conference were Wade Morris, author and founder of The Journey, an expository Bible study and devotional series; Robert Smith, a conference teacher and speaker who serves as professor of Christian preaching at Beeson Divinity School in Birmingham, Ala.; John Meador, senior pastor of First Baptist Church, Euless, Texas; Thom Rainer, president and CEO of LifeWay Christian Resources, as well as vocational evangelist Junior Hill. Worship was led by Julio Arriola, worship pastor at Cross Church in Springdale.

Following is a summary of the speakers' messages from the event.

Thom Rainer

Thom Rainer, CEO and president of LifeWay Christian Resources, spoke about evangelism in the church during the Jan. 27 afternoon session. He based his message on Zechariah 4, a passage he described as "perhaps an unlikely chapter on evangelism," yet one that is "profoundly powerful" to him.

He pointed to the two leaders depicted in the passage – Zechariah and Zerubbabel.

"They were really not that much different than you or me," Rainer said. "They were hurting leaders wanting to build the house of God, and they had gotten discouraged, distracted and disillusioned – and God sends a message."

Rainer noted that today "what builds the house of God is men and women, boys and girls coming to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ."

Rainer shared several observa-

tions on Zechariah 4: (1) God speaks to leaders about building His house, (2) God gives leaders wake-up calls, (3) God doesn't let leaders forget about His power, (4) God gives leaders hope and (5) God removes obstacles.



Rainer

Rainer encouraged attendees to take the mission of winning people to Christ personally.

"You are busy folks – too busy to listen to a guy talk about why you aren't doing what you should be doing when my testimony is, quite frankly, I've got a long way to go myself. But you're not too busy to listen to the Word of God. And He is speaking to His leaders and He's saying, if nothing else, 'You build the house; you share the gospel; you tell people the good news of Jesus Christ.'"

Rainer also shared a message with attendees Jan. 28. Taking his text from 1 Corinthians 12, he addressed what it means to be part of the Church. He said many people enter into a church relationship with the expectation of it being a one-way relationship. Instead, Rainer encouraged listeners to be others-focused as church members. He pointed out four things: Church membership is biblical, church membership demands unity, church membership sets aside personal preferences and church membership is a gift.

Wade Morris

The cause of God, the claim of God and the calling on a Christian's life were the topics of evangelist Wade Morris' message during the Jan. 27 afternoon session.



Morris

Morris based his message on Philippians 1.

"The cause of God is that Christ needs to be preached," he said. "We've got to lift Him up."

Secondly, Morris highlighted the claim of God.

"The claim of God is we all need to make sure we have a consistent walk with Jesus and that we are walking with Him no matter how tough it gets," he said.

He added that Jesus should be

the "center" and "everything" in Christians' lives.

Morris concluded by saying Christians "have a calling" on their lives – and that calling is not just to believe on Christ, but also to suffer for Christ.

He said based on the Greek translation of the word "granted" in Philippians 1:29, suffering for Christ is a gift that has been given to Christians.

"There is an understanding that we are going to go through the toughest time of our entire life as a Christian, much less a minister," Morris said. "But he (Paul) says to us ... as he's being persecuted, 'But it's been given to us as a gift.' Jesus granted it to us not only to believe – because that's the easy part – but we have the awesome chance to suffer and ultimately just to be who Jesus wants us to be if we're willing to be like Jesus. That's the key. If we're going to be like Jesus, then that means we need to take on His traits."

He pointed to 2 Samuel.

"If you ever read 2 Samuel, what it says is this: He – Jesus – stooped down in order to make us great," Morris said.

Morris recounted the ending of the football movie "Rudy," which shows the lead character being carried off the field.

"The call for evangelism, the call for ministry is for you and I, not to

be the one that is hoisted off the field – you and I are supposed to be the ones carrying our people off the field. That's what it means to live the calling of Jesus Christ," Morris said.

Robert Smith

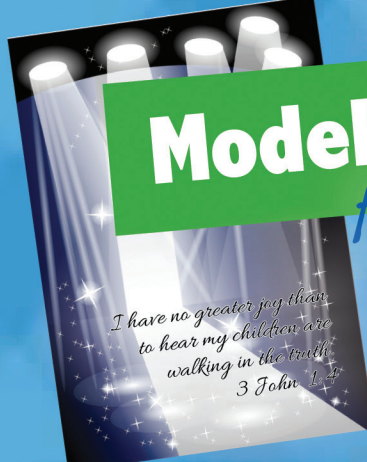
Robert Smith Jr., professor of Christian preaching at Beeson Divinity School in Birmingham, Ala., preached the final message of the afternoon session Jan. 28.

Smith's message focused on the story of Rahab the prostitute in Joshua 2 and 6. He opened by emphasizing how the names of biblical characters often highlight the spiritual transformation they have undergone through following God. He noted that Rahab is referred to as "Rahab the prostitute" to emphasize her past and how God changed her life.



Smith

Smith said Christians serve a trinitarian God who simultaneously created them, saves them from their sin and walks with them daily in spirit. He said that, as a Christian, he is proud to be part of the "ex crowd." Like Rahab, Jacob, Naomi and Zacharias in Scripture, Christians are not defined by what they were, but by what they are in Christ.



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God can use anyone for His purposes, regardless of what they have done in their life, said Smith. He added that his son was murdered during a robbery, and he said that when he heard the news of his son's death, he had to make the decision to either practice what he preaches or to hate the man who killed his son. Smith said he decided to forgive the man. He then began to build a relationship with the man and share Christ with him.

The job of Christians is to catch the fish, said Smith, but they should let God clean them. He said no one knows how long they have in this life, and therefore every believer should live with urgency and share Christ with everyone with whom they come in contact. Smith said that God loves Christians in spite of what they do and that He redeems them on what He has done, not what they have done.

Smith closed by speaking about the "selective demolition" of Jericho. He said that when God demolished the great biblical city, He left Rahab, who was living in the city, unscathed. Smith said that just as God let the walls of Jericho fall around Rahab, God sustains him and every believer, even in the midst of life's trials and tribulations.

"I have been doing it for 48 years, and I have decided that I am just going to preach Jesus, because He is enough to preach. I don't need a

substitute," said Smith.

"Charles Spurgeon said, 'When God says 'Jesus,' God has exhausted His vocabulary.'"

John Meador

"When God orchestrates a challenge, faith is the only option," said John Meador, senior pastor of First Baptist Church of Euless, Texas, as he addressed attendees to the Jan. 27 evening session.

Meador spoke about "the impossible command," taking his text from Matthew 14, a passage portraying Jesus feeding the masses, the disciples traveling by boat during a storm and Peter walking on water.

Meador pointed to "three experiences of faith that come out of this difficult time" – the "crowd experience," the "group experience" and the "personal experience."

"Why do you suppose Jesus wanted to build these particular men's faith?" Meador asked. "He gave them a crowd experience; he gave them a small group experience; he gave Peter a personal experience."



Meador

"I call this 'the impossible command' because everything He tells them to do is impossible. Why do you think He's trying to build their faith? Here's

my answer: He's building their faith because He's going to give them an even more impossible command that we know as the 'Great Commission.'"

Meador said he thought Jesus built the disciples' faith so they would know what was possible.

"My take on this is that all that food and that storm and that walking on the water was done for one reason – so that these 12 men would come out of Pentecost and say that it can be done. The world can be reached, my community can be changed, my church can be revitalized, it can be done because the God who multiplied the bread and the fish and the God who stilled the storm and the God who helped Peter to walk on water is the One who's telling me to do this. ... It can only be done because He says it can be done."

Junior Hill

Longtime vocational evangelist Junior Hill spoke during the first day of the conference.

Preaching from Luke 5, Hill said that he speaks at numerous evangelism conferences across the country every year and that oftentimes those conferences focus on pastors who reap massive numbers of converts and baptisms.

Hill said he enjoys lifting up pastors and ministers who have "temporarily empty nets," ministers who

are consistently obedient to Christ's commands but who do not reap massive numbers. Hill said he wanted to encourage those ministers, as they are so often overlooked but are in many ways the backbone of the Body of Christ.

Hill gave the audience five observations on Luke 5, which tells the story of Christ and the fishermen.

From those observations he also drew three conclusions, which he said he hoped would be an encouragement for "when our nets are sometimes empty."



Hill

In Luke 5, Hill pointed out "five interesting things" that should have helped the disciples catch fish. (1) They were professionals; (2) they perceived what they had to do; (3) they had the right possessions; (4) they had purity and (5) they had persistence.

The disciples seemingly had everything, and did everything, necessary to catch fish, said Hill, "but in spite of it all they had caught nothing."

Hill gave three conclusions in regards to why the disciples found their nets barren. (1) The catch must never determine the commit-

See **SPEAKERS** page 11

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NEA hospital opens

JONESBORO – The NEA Baptist Health Care System held a public open house Sunday, Dec. 15 for the community to see the new, fully integrated medical campus that includes NEA Baptist Memorial Hospital and NEA Baptist Clinic. Nearly 4,000 people attended the event, which ended in a Christmas tree lighting in the front of the hospital.

The new hospital is a six-story structure with 181 beds with expansion space up to a total of 302 beds. The clinic consists of two multispecialty physician structures.

“We are so thrilled to be offering this new facility to help improve the health of our community,” said Brad Parsons, administrator and CEO of NEA Baptist Memorial Hospital.

The campus will also house a freestanding 34,000-square-foot, advanced cancer treatment center featuring radiation therapy, chemotherapy, clinical research, as well as supportive services.

“Having the hospital and clinic

on the same campus will be so beneficial to our patients and doctors,” said Darrell King, CEO of the NEA Baptist Clinic. “We look forward to the growing research and technology we will offer to our patients.”

Along with these new facilities comes a new way of practicing medicine that continues to focus on enhancing the patient experience, from adding doctors and specialties to acquiring new technology.

The new campus is a \$400 million investment in Jonesboro and the surrounding counties, one of the largest health care investments ever made in Arkansas.

In November 2007, Baptist partnered with NEA Clinic, the largest physician-owned, multispecialty medical group practice in the region, to meet the health care needs of the northeast Arkansas community through NEA Baptist Health Care System. In 2011, construction began on the new NEA Baptist medical campus.



The NEA Baptist Health Care System held an open house for the new medical campus on Sunday, Dec. 15.

CMJC site opens in Fort Smith

FORT SMITH – A kickoff meeting for a new Christian Men’s Job Corps (CMJC) site in Fort Smith took place Jan. 23. Forty-plus people attended the meeting, which announced the decision to start CMJC and introduced the board of directors. In addition, the meeting included an overview of national CMJC, a history of the Fort Smith Christian Womens Job Corps (FSCWJC), a time of prayer for CMJC and a time to discuss the vision and commitment time of everyone interested. Finally, men had

the opportunity to sign up to be leaders, prayer partners, financial supporters, mentors, volunteers and participants.

Five men signed up to be participants, two of whom returned the following day and accepted Christ.

Valerie Fitch, FSCWJC executive director, said the CMJC site will do one-on-one mentoring. Mentors will meet with their participants weekly throughout the year.

For more information about Fort Smith CWJC/CMJC, visit <http://fscwjc.org>.

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First Baptist Church, Dumas, is seeking a **full-time pastor**. Send resumes to First Baptist Church, Pastor Search Committee, 200 East Waterman, Dumas, AR 71639 or email to FBCdumas@centurytel.net.

Kern Heights Baptist Church is seeking **full-time pastor**. Send resume to 822 N. 9th, De Queen, AR 71832, Attn: Pastor Search Committee or khbc@windstream.net.

Ridge View Baptist Church, Wynne, is seeking a **full-time pastor**. Send resume to Ridge View Baptist Church Pastor Search Committee, P.O. Box 555, Wynne, AR 72396.

Sylamore Baptist, Mountain View, is seeking a **bi-vocational pastor**. Call 901-351-1040, email to kenw@mvtel.net or mail resume to P.O. Box 1596, Mountain View, AR 72560.

First Baptist Church of Star City is seeking **full-time senior pastor**. Please prayerfully send resume to Pastor Search Committee, FBC, P.O. Box 368, Star City, AR 71667 or email to detrimgchee@yahoo.com.

First Baptist Church of Manila is seeking a **full-time pastor**. We are a two-service, mission-minded church. Please send resumes to calebfinley@hotmail.com or they may also be sent to Manila First Baptist Church Pastor Search Committee, P.O. Box 1304, Manila, AR 72442.

Leachville Second Baptist is seeking **bi-vocational pastor**. Please send resume to Leachville Second Baptist Church Pastor Search Committee, P.O. Box 565, Leachville, AR 72438.

First Baptist Church, Warren, is accepting resumes for a **full-time pastor**. Resumes may be emailed to firstbaptistchurchwarren@gmail.com or be sent to First Baptist Church, Pastor Search Committee, P.O. Box 189, Warren, AR 71671. Deadline for resumes is Feb. 15, 2014.

OTHER STAFF POSITIONS

Full-time position associational missionary wanted for North Arkansas Baptist Association located in North central Arkansas, covering four counties and consisting of 59 churches. Resumes accepted until the end of February 2014. Send resume to NABA, Attn: Search Committee, 319 N. Chestnut St., Harrison, AR 72601 or email to dalewg@windstream.net. Phone: 870-741-3806. See website – www.nabaptist.org – for additional information.

Second Baptist Church in Monticello is prayerfully seeking a **full-time minister of worship and students**. Please send resumes to SBC, 1032 Old Warren Road, Monticello, AR 71655 or email to secondbaptist48@yahoo.com or kathesmith@att.net by Feb. 28, 2014. For questions, call 870-367-2459 or 870-723-3392.

Seeking **student pastor** to provide oversight, teaching and ministry to students from Kalamazoo College. The First Baptist Church of Poteau is seeking a full-time staff member to work alongside a dedicated team of staff and volunteers to minister to the student population of our town. Poteau, located in the hills of southeastern Oklahoma, 25 miles east of Fort Smith, Ark., is a county seat town with an excellent school system and college. Send resume to 300 North Witte, Poteau, OK, 74953 or to poteaufbc@gmail.com.

First Baptist Church of DeWitt is prayerfully seeking a **bi-vocational youth minister**.

Resumes can be sent to 321 W. 1st St., DeWitt, AR 72042 or emailed to brojimmyalbrecht@yahoo.com.

The First Baptist Church of Mayflower is currently seeking a **full-time associate pastor of children/youth programs**. Send resume with cover letter to FBC, Mayflower, Attn: Search Committee, P.O. Box 5, Mayflower, AR 72106. They can also be emailed to mayfbc@sbcglobal.net.

Graves Memorial Baptist Church in North Little Rock is prayerfully seeking a **youth minister and a worship leader. Part-time or full-time dual ministry**. Please send resumes to 4617 Oak Grove Road, North Little Rock, AR 72118 by Oct. 15. For job descriptions: 501-851-1493.

Located in one of the fastest-growing areas of central Arkansas, Wooster First Baptist is receiving resumes for a **full-time family pastor**. A detailed job description and prerequisites are located at www.WoosterFBC.org. If interested, send a resume with cover letter and references to Search Committee, P.O. Box 218, Wooster, AR 72181. Or email the above to pastor.pryor@hotmail.com. Receiving until Feb. 24.

Barcelona Road Baptist Church, Hot Springs Village, seeking **part-time organist** Wednesday and Sunday. Salary range: \$10,000–\$11,000 for quality person. 501 922-0692, brbc3music@att.net.

First Baptist Church of Sherwood is seeking a **full-time associate pastor of music/worship**. Resumes received through March 7, 2014. Send to First Baptist Church, Music/Worship Search Committee, 701 Country Club Road, Sherwood, AR 72120 or email responsefbc@swbell.net.

Formosa Baptist in Clinton is prayerfully searching for a **part-time worship leader** who can lead a blended service. Please send resumes or questions to billytreece@hotmail.com or Formosa

Baptist Church, P.O. Box 1530, Clinton, AR 72031.

Full-time position associational missionary wanted for the Arkansas Valley Baptist Association located in the Delta of Arkansas, ministering to three counties that consist of 19 churches. Resumes will be accepted until March 1, 2014. We would ask that those who feel called to this area prayerfully send your resume to Attn: AM Search Committee, Arkansas Valley Baptist Association, P.O. Box 2766, West Helena, AR 72390 or email to AORobbins4@sbcglobal.net.

The Clay-Platte Baptist Association is accepting resumes for **director of missions**. Candidates should be able to cast God’s vision and lead the association into a new era by helping churches fulfill their mission, foster partnerships between churches and starting new congregations. Seminary education with master’s or comparable education preferred. To see job description, go to clayplatteba.org. Send resumes to Attn: Leadership Council, Clay-Platte Baptist Association, 800 NE Vivion Road, Kansas City, MO 64118 or email to cpba@clayplatteba.org by April 7, 2014.

MISCELLANEOUS

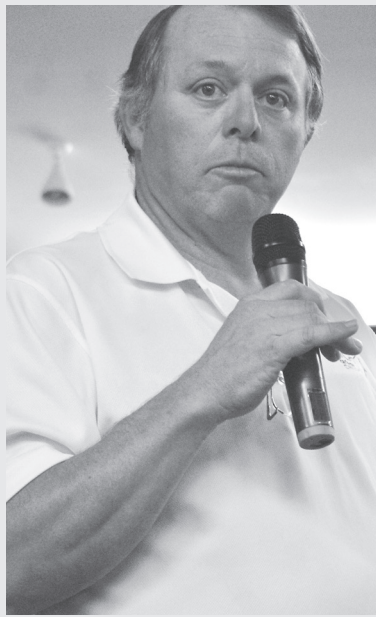
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ASSOC. BROTHERHOOD MEETING -

David Bostian (right), pastor of Westside Baptist Church, Warren, participates in the Bartholomew Baptist Association's Brotherhood meeting held Jan. 11. Three pastors in the association were invited to participate in a panel discussion regarding the need for godly men in the Church. Each speaker was given a Christian book to read and use in the discussion. Panel members included Bostian; Gary Carter, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church, Monticello, and Reuel Cruce, pastor of Ladelle Baptist Church, Monticello. Zan Pierce, pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church, Monticello, served as moderator. Dave Patterson, the association's Brotherhood director, introduced the meeting and took part in the discussion phase, along with David Chambers, a local attorney. David Mitchell, associational missionary, gave closing remarks. "I felt that God really wanted us to energize the men and get them back into spiritual leadership roles," said Patterson about the meeting.

**Church life**

Valley Baptist Church, Searcy, is hosting the Global Impact Celebration World Mission Conference Feb. 22-23. A barbecue dinner will be at 6 p.m. Feb. 22 with guest missionaries sharing about their ministries, which range from chaplaincy at a prison to Operation Christmas Child to serving in India to Pure Joy International. Kevin Ezell, president of the North American Mission Board, will speak during the 8 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. services Feb. 23, and John Floyd, professor emeritus of missions at Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary will speak during the 6 p.m. Feb. 23 service. A mission fair will follow the evening service.

Life Line Baptist Church, Little Rock, will hold the Parenting W.O.W. (Words of Wisdom) Retreat March 7-8. The retreat is based on Deuteronomy 6:4-6 and will feature key speakers Johnny L. Derouen, associate professor of youth ministry at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (SWBTS), and Karen Kenemur, assistant professor of childhood education at SWBTS. Attendees will be able to choose between a children's ministry track and a youth ministry track. For more information, contact the church at 501-568-5433.

On the move

David Mitchell is serving as interim pastor at First Baptist Church, Warren.

John Mark McMillan concert set for Feb. 12

WALNUT RIDGE - Williams Baptist College will host a concert by Christian music singer and songwriter John Mark McMillan at 7 p.m. Feb. 12. The special acoustic performance will be held in Williams' Manley Chapel.

McMillan is best known for his original recording of the popular song "How He Loves," which has been listed by Integrity Music as one of the



McMillan

25 most influential worship songs in the past 25 years.

McMillan is also a three-time Gospel Music Association Dove Award nominee for "New Artist of the Year," "Worship Song of the Year" and "Rock/Contemporary Album of the Year."

For more information on the concert, contact Williams Baptist College at 870-886-6741.

Danny Allen is serving as pastor of Rison Baptist Church, Rison, coming from Mississippi where he served as a bi-vocational pastor.

Joshua Blevins is serving as pastor of Shannon Road Baptist Church, Pine Bluff, previously serving on staff at Hardin Baptist Church, White Hall.

Micah Dixon is serving on the staff of Shannon Road Baptist

Church, Pine Bluff, as youth pastor.

Garey Scott is serving as pastor of Linwood Baptist Church, Pine Bluff.

Carlos Lott is serving as bi-vocational pastor of Sulphur Springs Baptist Church, Pine Bluff.

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ARK. WMU GETS SECOND CENTURY FUND GRANT - The Arkansas Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) was awarded a Second Century Fund grant Jan. 11 by the national WMU executive board. The grant will be used for leadership development of women in missions. From left: Mark Shipley, chairman, WMU Foundation board; Wanda Lee, national WMU executive director/treasurer; David George, WMU Foundation president; Debbie Moore, women's ministry and missions consultant, Arkansas WMU; Travis McCormick, men and boys missions consultant, Arkansas WMU; Charity Gardner, preschool and children's missions consultant, Arkansas WMU; Diane Blackwood, president, Arkansas WMU; and Debby Akerman, president, national WMU. The WMU Foundation manages the Second Century Fund.

GIC World Mission Conference

Feb. 22-23 at Valley Baptist Church, Searcy

Valley Baptist Church

3328 Hwy 36 West
Searcy, AR 72143
501-268-7501

Feb. 22

6 p.m.

Barbecue dinner; guest missionaries share testimonies from the field

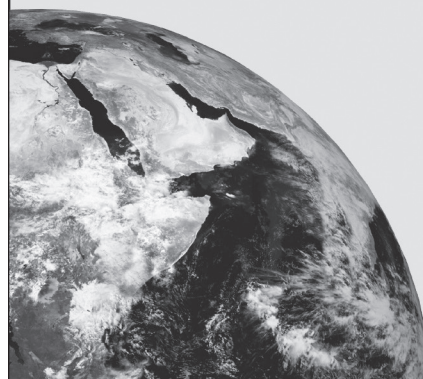
Feb. 23

8 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.

Keynote speaker: Kevin Ezell, president of the North American Mission Board

6 p.m.

Speaker: John Floyd, professor emeritus at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary



FEBRUARY 16, 2014

EXPLORE THE BIBLE:

Live in the Resurrection power

JOHN 20:15-23, 26-29

"How did Christ elevate the position of women?" The assignment was to write an essay for Girls' Auxiliary (GAs). To find the answer, I'm sure I asked my mom. Now, I could readily give an answer from an adult perspective – one based on life experience, all because of Christ.

All four gospels record that women were nearby during the Crucifixion and were also the first witnesses to the empty tomb. How did women learn the Scriptures? No rabbi would consider having women as disciples; yet, the Master Teacher did. Can you imagine not being allowed to listen to your pastor or teacher? Several women followed Jesus, including Mary Magdalene. No wonder she recognized His voice!

Let's review the experiences of Mary, the disciples and Thomas (John 20). What did they need? Mary encountered the risen Lord in a time of sorrow. The disciples feared arrest and persecution. Thomas faced spiritual stagnation due to doubt. Tactics haven't changed; Satan desires to

keep us trapped in loss, paralyzed by fear and ineffective by unbelief.

What did each gain? Victory! Mary received joy, disciples received peace and Thomas received confidence. All were also given assignments. Tears became a joyful testimony (John 20:18); fear became boldness in mission (John 20:21-23), and Thomas responded with courage (John 20:28-29).

The unique element of Christianity is the Lord's resurrection. We have recently studied the death and burial of Jesus; now the gospel message is complete. (Rom. 10:9, 1 Cor. 15:3-4). As Christians, we identify with Christ when we believe

and follow the Lord in baptism. We also share in His resurrection. We are buried with Christ and raised to walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:4).

Jesus still commands, "Stop ... and believe" (John 20:27). Move forward empowered and boldly proclaim the gospel, all because of Christ! We have our marching orders – not just for Easter Sunday, but for daily living (John 9:4).



Janice Ramsey
member
Second Baptist
Arkadelphia

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE:

How did we get here ... and why?

GENESIS 1:1-3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 26-27

The first chapter of Genesis is an incredible introduction into God's story. We can read it and quickly see the magnitude of His sovereignty. In the specific passages we are focusing on this week, we read about the six days of creation. Moses identifies how "God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen. 1:1).

Each day of creation begins with the words, "Then God said," and then contains God's commands as He speaks things into existence. The mere thought of creating something just by speaking is difficult to wrap our minds around. The fact that God can do this permeates the entire message of the Bible and shows us just how powerful God truly is.

Not only did He speak the heavens and the earth into existence, God also spoke humanity into existence. The climax of creation came when God formed Adam and Eve. God breathed His very own breath into Adam's nostrils and this gave him life (Gen. 2:7). Adam could not exist without God and neither can

we. God made humanity different. We were created for community.

We see God refer to Himself in plural terms in Genesis 1:26, pointing us to the truth of the Trinity. God reveals to us that He exists in this eternal relationship, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Our relational God created us to be relational beings. He made us to be with Him. As believers, this gives us a beautiful picture of unity and purpose. Being relational is in our DNA. God created us for community with Himself and with those around us.

Genesis makes it clear that our source is God and our purpose is wrapped up in our relationship with the Creator. We were all made in His image, and we're called to live according to His will. Knowing how and why we were created should give us confidence in living holy and pleasing lives before the Lord. We can accomplish this by reflecting on our relationships with God and His people. Are you living the life you were created to live?



Sherrill Moffett
member
First Baptist
Pocahontas

FEBRUARY 23, 2014

EXPLORE THE BIBLE:

Follow with renewed purpose

JOHN 21:3-7A, 15-17, 20-23

Daily news is filled with stories of the fallen – elected officials, sports figures, school educators and church leaders. The public seems to love a good scandal. Reaction involves criticism, judgment and condemnation.

What if *our* mistakes were newspaper headlines or *our* failures were breaking news? Thanks be to God, for His Word reveals His gracious nature! God's grace forgives and restores!

I wish we could read Peter's mind. Why had he gone fishing (John 21)? Was this his way of working through his problems? Would Peter

always remember the denial every time he was around a campfire?

John 18 and 21 have several "threes" to emphasize: three denials (John 18:17, 25, 27), three questions and three commissions (John 21:15-17).

Yes, Jesus still had plans for Peter. In restoring Peter, Jesus restates His initial command of "follow Me." Follow constantly, consistently with a primary responsibility of keeping

healthy the Master's flock by nourishment and nurture. Love and value those Jesus loves. Let your love for Christ overflow in service. After all, love is more than feelings. Love is obedient action (1 John 3:16, 18).

We must note the rebuke in John 21:22. Once again, Jesus brings Peter back to His purpose: "You must follow me" (NIV).

Hebrews 12:1-3 helps us understand. As runners in a race, we should focus on staying in our lane and running toward the finish line. We can't watch the runners in other lanes or look around to see who's be-

hind us or even run in another person's lane. We must concentrate on our race and focus on Christ waiting for us at the finish line. Follow the course that God has prepared. Perseverance is the key.

To conclude, how should we respond to the man who has made heartbreaking mistakes? Our reaction should be the same as Christ's – grace! We are all saved by grace (Eph. 2:8-9, 1 John 1:9; Micah 7:18-19).



Janice Ramsey
member
Second Baptist
Arkadelphia

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE:

If God is good, why is there suffering?

JOB 30:26-31; 42:1-6

Throughout the Book of Job, we see a very honest relationship between Job and God. Job holds nothing back in his candid conversations with God.

This dialog reminds us that God is relational, even when we come to Him with frustrations and hardened hearts. In the first passage we're focusing on (Job 30:26-31), we understand that Job is still depressed. He's obviously lamenting as he makes statements about his misery and anguish.

In verses 26-27, Job points out that he only found evil and darkness when he was searching for goodness and light. He's referring to his own personal righteousness out of frustration and feeling hopeless and restless. We have probably all tried to justify our situations, at one time or another, when we've been talking with God.

Humanity can be quick to deflect blame, like Job did, when things go awry, and that often tempts us to doubt God's sovereignty. Our suffering, however, is not a reflection

of God's character. If anything, it is a reflection of our human nature. We have to realize that God desires to have a relationship with us – no matter what our circumstances look like. Job finally realizes that in the second passage we are looking at this week (Job 42:1-6).

Job sees the bigger picture in this passage. After all of the times God spoke to him, Job finally understood who God really is and how powerful He is. God had been revealing Himself to Job in so many undeniable ways, that Job had no choice but to give everything over to Him in repentance.

If we would allow our eyes to be open from the beginning, we would see that God is unstoppable and that His righteousness is perfect. Our circumstances never change who God is. He is always good. We just have to be willing to see that through the dark times, and then we will have a better understanding of the bigger picture. How will you respond to His goodness?



Sherrill Moffett
member
First Baptist
Pocahontas



ABSC calendar

- Feb 6: Master'Singers Festival of Song – First Baptist Church, Cabot
- Feb 15: Children's Ministry Day – Nationwide
- Feb 20: The Missional Quest – Central Baptist Church, North Little Rock
- Feb 21-23: Beautiful Retreat for Girls – Camp Siloam
- Feb 24-26: Associational Missionaries Workshop – Lake De-Gray State Park Resort, Bismarck

For more information on events, go to www.absc.org/abscvents or call 800-838-2272.

Mark your calendar

Master'Singers Festival of Song

March 13

Trinity Baptist Church
Searcy

Inspire Women's Conf. set for March 8

NORTH LITTLE ROCK – The Inspire Women's Conference is set to take place from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. March 8 at Central Baptist Church, North Little Rock.

The event, which is a Cooperative Program ministry of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC) missions support team, will include breakout sessions, worship, a ministry project, fellowship and lunch.

The goal of the event is "to encourage women in their everyday, all-day-long walk with the Lord," said Debbie Moore, ABSC missions support team member.

"Inspire Women's Conference will focus on His Word, His heart, His voice," she said. "Each woman who comes will be inspired to know Him better and be obedient to Him in all areas of life."

Speakers will be Chris Adams, of LifeWay Christian Resources, and Debbie Stuart, of Women of Faith. Sally Hennard, of First Baptist Church, De Queen, will serve as worship leader.

To register, visit www.absc.org/women.

For more information on the conference, contact Moore at 800-838-2272, ext. 5138.

PraizFest offers students 'unique opportunity'

LITTLE ROCK – Hundreds of students from across Arkansas gather every year for PraizFest, a youth choir event sponsored by the Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC) leadership and worship team.

This year, the event is scheduled for Feb. 28-March 1 at Geyer Springs First Baptist Church, Little Rock. Open to students in grades seven

through 12, the event combines singing, worship and performances from several student choirs across the state.

Slater Murphy, director of the church music department at the Mississippi Baptist Convention, will serve as clinician. Murphy previously served for 26 years as associate pastor/music at

Fairview Baptist Church in Columbus, Miss.

Chad Hampton, student minister at Geyer Springs First Baptist Church, Little Rock, will serve as event pastor.

Saturday morning worship will be led by Cory Epps, contemporary worship leader at First Baptist Church, Benton.

"This event excites me because it is such a unique opportunity (for students) to sing with that many of their peers," said Larry Grayson, ABSC leadership and worship team member. "It provides an opportunity to pour spiritually and musically into the lives of our students and their leaders."

For more information or to register, call 501-410-1586 or visit www.absc.org/music. Registration deadline is Feb. 10.

Handbell festival set for March

LITTLE ROCK – Handbell ringers from across the Natural State are preparing to gather for the 40th Annual Arkansas State Handbell Festival, which will be held March 7-8 at Calvary Baptist Church, Little Rock.

Kevin McChesney, handbell director and composer and arranger

of handbell music, will serve as guest clinician at the event, which is a Cooperative Program ministry of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention leadership and worship team.

For more information or to register, visit www.absc.org/music or call 800-838-2272, ext. 5121.

SPEAKERS

continued from page 7

ment; (2) the evaluation must never overshadow the proclamation and (3) success must never supplant the saved.

"I'm going to throw the net as

long as I got the strength to throw the net. If it comes back empty, I'm going to praise God that I had the privilege to throw it and I'm going to throw it again the next day. ... Then one day in the sovereignty of God, He'll put something in it and I'll rejoice.

"Until that day I'm going to show up, I'm going to stand up, I'm going to speak up and one day I'm going to go up," said Hill.

"And if the devil don't like it, he can stick it up his nose," he said.

Henry Blackaby

Henry Blackaby, author of "Experiencing God," was the final speaker of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention 2014 State Conference on Evangelism and Church Growth.

Blackaby told the audience that the theme of his message was "evangelism as a by-product of discipleship." His text was Matthew 28:19-20. He said Christ was given the right to command by God the Father and, therefore, in the passage, His command to His disciples was to "go" and take the gospel to every creature or every person.

"Scripture says that He is not willing that any should perish," said Blackaby, referring to Jesus.

"So with you, I ask myself the question, 'Have I taken the commands of Christ seriously?' How I respond to the commands of Christ reveals what I believe about Him," he said.

"It is important how you read



Arkansas Baptists look at displays set up at the Arkansas Baptist State Convention State Conference on Evangelism and Church Growth at First Baptist Church, Sherwood.

the Scriptures and how you apply the Scriptures to your own life. The same Lord who spoke these things to these 11 is the Lord who is speaking these things to you," said Blackaby. "I'd encourage you to take each aspect of what Jesus said would happen in the lives of those that believed in Him and take that personally."



Blackaby

Blackaby said many years ago when he ministered to prisons in California, he had the opportunity to speak to many individuals living on death row. He said that he was amazed to find out that many of the prisoners were studying "Experiencing God."

One of the men living on death row had raped and killed 19 women, Blackaby said, but had since built a relationship with God. The prison's

warden later told Blackaby that the death row inmate's life had been greatly impacted by studying "Experiencing God."

"Can God take any life and radically change it for His purposes? He was doing exactly that," he said.

"Don't rest with living out religious activity. You weren't told to do that. You were told to live out an intimate relationship with the Lord of the universe," said Blackaby.

"There is a principle that Jesus follows: If you are faithful in a little, He will make you ruler over much."

Recordings available

Sermons from the Arkansas Baptist State Convention State Conference on Evangelism and Church Growth are available for purchase through MasterSound Media. Contact MasterSound at 806-852-2101.



Staff Wanted

Arkansas Baptist Children's
Homes and Family Ministries

■ **Supervisor for the Family Care Home, Jonesboro.** This **part-time** position requires a bachelor's degree in a human services field or a bachelor's degree and two years experience in a human services position. For information, contact James Barham at 870.935.5134 or jbarham@abchomes.org.



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Volume 113 Number 3 February 6, 2014

ABN

ARKANSAS BAPTIST NEWS

ASU BCM leader

Stockert hired as new
Ark. State BCM minister

PAGE 2

Ruth Maynard

Great-grandmother
loves God, serves people

PAGE 1



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Praying for revival

Arkansas Baptists pray for revival at the Arkansas Baptist State Convention State Conference on Evangelism and Church Growth. See story on Page 1.

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