



Arkansas Baptist disaster relief

Crews respond after severe storms

A MASSIVE OUTBREAK of severe weather, including heavy rain, hail, flash flooding, straight-line winds and tornadoes, battered the southeastern half of the United States, including Arkansas, April 25-28.

More than 260 people were killed in the storms, which spawned an estimated 250 tornadoes, according to reports on the Weather.com Web site. At least five tornadoes have been confirmed in Arkansas. At press time, state media were reporting 12 Arkansans have died as a result of the storms.

Arkansas Baptist disaster relief volunteers worked in five areas throughout the state, removing fallen trees from homes, cleaning up debris, securing tarps on damaged roofs, feeding storm victims and even providing spiritual counseling in storm-damaged communities.

In Hot Springs, the following churches and associations provided assistance: Balboa Baptist Church, Hot Springs Village; Arkansas River Valley Baptist Association, Russellville; and Little River Baptist Association, Nashville. Volunteers are working out of Walnut Valley Baptist Church, Hot Springs Village, which also sustained some damage in the storms. A crisis chaplain was also available to provide counseling to storm victims.

Recovery units working in the Vilonia area included Unit No. 1; Arkansas Valley Baptist Association, West Helena; Harmony Baptist As-



Charlie Collins, a member of The Church at Rock Creek, Little Rock, cuts up a fallen tree.

sociation, Pine Bluff; and Caroline Baptist Association, Lonoke. In addition, the Calvary Baptist Association, Searcy, feeding unit provided more than 300 meals, and the Mount Zion Baptist Association, Jonesboro, set up its shower unit at First Baptist Church, Vilonia. Two crisis chaplains provided counseling to storm victims.

Disaster relief volunteers from Union Valley Baptist Church, Searcy; Independence Baptist Association, Batesville; and Rocky Bayou Baptist Association, Franklin, provided assistance in the Beebe/Cabot area. First Baptist Church, Beebe, served as base of operations.

Recovery units in the North Little Rock area included North Pulaski Baptist Association, Sherwood, and The Church at Rock Creek, Little Rock.

First Baptist Church, Marion, served as base of operations for disaster relief crews from Tri-County Baptist Association, Wynne; Walnut Street Baptist Church, Jonesboro; and Mississippi County Baptist Association, Blytheville.

Following another severe storm system April 19, Arkansas Baptist disaster relief volunteers worked in Osceola and Wilson and surrounding areas.

Clay Hallmark, pastor of First Baptist Church, Marion, applauded the quick response of disaster relief volunteers following the storm.

"As soon as the storm blew over Tuesday night in eastern Arkansas, ABSC disaster relief teams were already mobilizing to descend upon the towns of Wilson, Kiser and Osceola to work clearing away the debris and destruction left by the storm," he said.

Hallmark said disaster relief volunteers provided not only recovery efforts for area residents, but also helped Harvest Baptist Church minister to the community. Harvest Baptist, a new church start sponsored by First Baptist, Marion, held its first service Easter Sunday.

He said, "When those yellow shirts and caps show up at someone's home, the gospel of Jesus Christ is also showing up with them."

Disaster relief recovery units deployed in eastern Arkansas included Mississippi County Baptist Association, Blytheville, Walnut Street Baptist Church, Jonesboro, and East Side Baptist Church, Osceola.

For more information, go to www.absc.org/vols-and-missions/disaster-relief.html, or contact Bill Cantrell at 800-838-2272, ext. 5249.

For more disaster relief coverage, go to www.arkansasbaptist.org.

Lisa Byrd 'Mother of the Year'

LISA BYRD, a member of First Baptist Church, Harrisburg, has been named the 2011 ABN Mother of the Year. Byrd was presented a gift card during the May 1 worship service at First Baptist.

ABN readers nominated mothers by submitting a "Tribute to a Godly Mother." Lindsey Byrd, Mrs. Byrd's 12-year-old grand-

daughter, submitted the winning nomination. Her tribute appears on page 8.

Lisa Byrd, who adopted her grandchildren, Lindsey and her two siblings, Leah, 11, and Austin, 8, works as a paid nursery worker at First Baptist and as a substitute teacher in the local elementary school.



Jaime Zamarrón, ICVI pastor

Rogers Hispanic ministry 'exciting'

Lisa Watson
Arkansas Baptist News

IT'S BEEN 10 YEARS since Jaime Zamarrón and Oliver Martínez began praying about the possibility of starting a Hispanic church.

The men, who were attending the Hispanic Baptist Seminary in San Antonio, Texas, at the time, prayed specifically for a number of things.

First, they prayed for a church to hire them as a church planting team - though they knew it would be out of the ordinary. Most churches hire only one church planter, not two.

They also prayed about the best area in which to plant a church. It needed to be one with a large Hispanic population.

But that's not all they prayed for. They also wanted to be close to a major airport for ease of doing international missions, as well as to be close to a university where internationals worked.

God answered their prayers when First Baptist Church, Rogers, hired both men to plant a Hispanic church in northwest Arkansas in 2003.

Wes George, pastor of First Baptist Church, Rogers, said the church "hit a home run" when Zamarrón and Martínez joined their staff.

"They are great guys," he said. "They are smart, cutting edge, humble and educated - the total package."

Within months, the duo had started a small Bible study in Rog-

ers. That core group began to grow, and it soon outgrew the home where it was meeting.

The church, Iglesia Cuerpo Vivo Internacional (ICVI), was formed from that group June 3, 2003, with 35 people.

Today, ICVI averages about 200 in worship. More than 300 attended the church's Easter Sunday service, said Zamarrón. ICVI plans to participate in the "Christ is the Answer" crusade. The Easter Sunday service was part of the church's commitment to the initiative.

The church meets at the former location of First Baptist Church, Rogers.

They say 80 percent of the peo-

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ABSC to participate in earthquake prep

DISASTERS OF ALL KINDS are a very real part of living in Arkansas, and often, people do not expect these disasters to affect them, said Robby Tingle, Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC) missions ministries team leader.

For this reason, ABSC disaster relief ministry leaders want to help churches be more prepared to handle all kinds of disasters, even earthquakes.

ABSC disaster relief workers are planning to participate in the National Level Exercise 2011 (NLE 11), an event that will simulate the catastrophic nature of a major earthquake in the central United States region of the New Madrid Seismic Zone (NMSZ). A portion of the NMSZ is located in Arkansas,

according to information on the Arkansas Department of Emergency Management Web site.

NLE 11, a White House-directed, Congressionally-mandated event, will focus on regional catastrophic response and recovery activities.

Arkansas Baptists will work alongside the American Red Cross and Salvation Army and ADEM, providing a variety of disaster relief services, including mass care, sheltering and feeding people who have been affected by the disaster.

"Preparedness is always the key to handling disasters," said Tingle.

"Disasters not only affect us personally, but affect our neighborhoods, communities and churches. If we are going to provide effective ministry in the midst of disasters,

preparation is foundational for assisting others in the name of Christ," he continued.

"We are always evaluating and looking for opportunities to be more prepared."

For more information about earthquake preparedness, go to www.adem.arkansas.gov or contact Bill Cantrell, ABSC missions ministries team member, at 800-838-2272 ext. 5249.

Contest deadline June 1

LITTLE ROCK - The deadline of the first ever *Arkansas Baptist News* (ABN) "Youth Group Video Contest" is June 1.

Winners will be notified by email, and their videos will be highlighted in an ABN digital edition and online at www.arkansasbaptist.org.

Videos will be judged by ABN and Arkansas Baptist State Convention staff.

Prizes include a flip video camera for first place and iTunes gift cards for second and third places. For more information and contest rules, go to www.arkansasbaptist.org.

Hispanic churches host 'mini-crusades'

SOMETHING NEW is on the horizon for Hispanic Baptist churches and missions in Arkansas - a crusade. But it's not your average crusade meeting with thousands of people meeting in one location to hear one pastor.

Instead, each Hispanic church or mission will have the opportunity to host a mini-crusade the first week of October.

Known as the Cruzada evangelística 'Cristo es la respuesta,' or 'Christ is the answer' crusade, the process has three stages, said Francisco Gómez, Arkansas Baptist State Convention missions ministries team member. Those stages are

preparation, execution and discipleship.

In the preparation stage, Arkansas Baptist Hispanic church members will have the opportunity to make a commitment to pray for 10 people for 12 minutes each day. Gómez is hopeful that church members will be praying for thousands of Hispanics in Arkansas.

The second stage is the actual execution of the local church mini-crusades. During the week of the crusade, church members will go door-to-door, sharing Christ with the people they have been praying for and inviting them to attend the nightly evangelistic services.

The last stage is discipleship. Church members will follow up with the people who attended the mini-crusade, giving them the opportunity for discipleship.

Gómez is excited about the potential for God to work through the mini-crusades. "We are doing the same thing, the same week, the same process, so that unbelievers don't have to travel (so far). They can go (a few) miles from their house to participate."

The ABSC is helping make this endeavor a reality by providing resources for the crusades through the Dixie Jackson State Missions Offering. Gómez is available to provide

training for Hispanic church members.

Lives are being changed and people are making commitments to follow Christ at several other Hispanic ministry events including the Hispanic pastors' retreat, the Hispanic children's camp, the Hispanic youth camp, the Hispanic women's conference and the Hispanic family conference.

For more information about these and other ministries for Hispanics in Arkansas, go to www.absc.org/ministries/hispanic-ministry.html, or contact Gómez at 800-838-2272 (toll free in state) or 501-376-4791, ext. 5149 or fgomez@absc.org.

HISPANIC

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ple who attend the church are new Christians, making professions of faith when they go through the membership classes at ICVI.

Zamarrón serves as the church's lead pastor. He preaches each week and counsels church members. "I also try to share the vision (of the ministry) with the church, especially a core group of leaders," said Zamarrón.

As associate Hispanic pastor, Martínez is responsible for supervising the worship ministry and leading the discipleship and teaching ministries of the church.

For the past seven years, ICVI members have served as translators and helped minister at River of Life Medical Clinic, which meets every other Thursday in Rogers. The First Baptist, Rogers, ministry provides basic medical needs for people in the community.

They also help share the gospel with people who come to the First Baptist's food pantry ministry. The church has also started a ministry to connect members of the Hispanic

community in need with people and organizations to help meet those needs. "For example, if someone needs a legal counselor, we can help them find one," said Zamarrón. Or if someone needs help paying hospital bills, we can connect them with people who can help with that."

In addition, on the second Saturday of each month, the church meets with families who have special needs children to connect them with people who can provide help that is tailored to that child's needs.

Zamarrón has started a soccer ministry with teams from ICVI playing in leagues in the community. "This is a good opportunity to connect with the people on the soccer fields," he said, noting many of the area's Hispanics play soccer on weekends.

In fact, many of the people who are active at ICVI first got involved through the soccer ministry.

But the church also ministers internationally, going on mission to Mexico, Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic.

The church has a vision to reach people through several new ministries focused on serving the community, said Martínez. These include

offering classes that provide help for parents with special needs children and that cover topics such as computer skills and English as a second language.

They even want to start a music school that would be open to other churches and would serve as an outreach and as a way to help develop worship leaders for the church.

But they don't want to stop with starting just one church. "Our vision in the beginning was to start a healthy church, one that would start new churches," said Zamarrón.

George would also like to see this happen. "My hope is that a church planting movement will happen."

They are committed to the command of the Great Commission - to make disciples. The church leaders worked alongside other Hispanic Baptist churches in the area, the Northwest Arkansas Baptist Association and the Arkansas Baptist State Convention to start a Bible Training Center called CECABI to develop new Christian leaders.

Zamarrón and Martínez would like to see all their members trained and able to start new cell groups in homes. "And this can be the beginning of new churches in the area and the nation," said Zamarrón.

Both Martínez and Zamarrón are active in the community and "well respected," said George. "They are willing to help other church planters. They do a lot of encouraging others."

For 2011, the church has adopted an aggressive goal. They hope to reach an attendance of 500 people. Zamarrón hopes the new outreach programs they are starting will help them to meet this goal. "We believe new people (who visit the church) are a gift from God to us," said Zamarrón. "We are trying to connect with these people and to let them know how important they are to us."

"We have room for improvement, but we are having a good time," said Martínez. "God is bringing more people in and developing new leaders."

"It's exciting." First Baptist Church feels the same about the ministry, noted George. "Our English-speaking folks are thrilled when they hear about victories in the Hispanic ministry."

"It's a vital part of our ministry ... and (an) important part of what we do here."

Contact Lisa Watson at lisa@arkansasbaptist.org.

Conversations with Arkansas' executive director

Bible, revival shape leadership role

Tim Yarbrough
Arkansas Baptist News

EDITOR'S NOTE: Arkansas Baptist State Convention executive director Emil Turner celebrated 15 years as the state's leader in January. The ABN recently sat down with Turner for a candid interview to discuss his thoughts on life, ministry and challenges as Arkansas Baptists seek to fulfill the Great Commission in the 21st century. This is the second and final article in a series.

LITTLE ROCK - God has a way of shaping our lives in ways we least expect, and for Emil Turner, it was his rural roots and upbringing that pointed him to Christ and full-time vocational ministry.

"My mother taught me to read from a King James Bible," said Turner of this childhood in northern Louisiana. "The first thing I read was the Sermon on the Mount. That was before I started school. I was 5 years old. That began (for me) a lifelong love for the Bible."

Turner said his parents were saved a few weeks before he trusted Jesus Christ as his personal Savior, and they took "what the preacher told them very seriously."

Call to ministry

Later, as a sophomore pursuing a degree in history at Louisiana State University (LSU), Turner said God used an encounter with a stranger to direct him to vocational ministry.

"I was really in trouble academically, ethically and in a lot of different ways," explained Turner. "I was living in a way that I couldn't stand to be alone. Every time I would get by myself, the Holy Spirit would begin to bring scripture verses to mind and convict me of the way I was living."

Then one day, a 20-year-old Turner went to the LSU student center to get lunch, but it was God who ended up dramatically getting his attention.

"(So) I sat down at a table where another person was sitting. ... I didn't know him, and he began to witness to me. I explained to him that I became a Christian at a very early age, and I knew I was saved," said Turner.

"He pulled a Bible out of his

backpack and opened it to Romans 7 and had me read what the Apostle (Paul) wrote about knowing the things that I knew of to do I didn't do - the things that I did do that I shouldn't do," Turner recounted. "I knew sin had mastery over me, and in the middle of that reading of that, I just began to weep. God so worked in my life that I began to weep almost uncontrollably; I'm sure I must have scared that man to death."

Turner said the stranger, who later became a close friend, used the moment to talk to him about how he could submit his life to the Lord and how to take control of it.

"That began, for me, a pathway to ministry," said Turner. "I began fresh in relationship with Jesus. I don't believe it was salvation, but a recommitment of my life to Him. He began to teach me to study the Bible and to share the gospel with other people."

After graduating from LSU, Turner served on the staff of Campus Crusade for Christ for five years before joining the staff of Hillvue Heights Baptist Church in Bowling Green, Ky.

Movement of God

In July 1983, Turner became pastor of First Baptist Church, Harrisonburg, La.

It was at the Harrisonburg church that Turner said he first witnessed what he calls a "spontaneous movement of God," that "resulted in a lot of people being saved and a lot of lives being changed."

The event started when Turner asked a pastor friend of his to come preach a revival.

"This pastor was not an evangelist," he noted. "He was a pastor."

Turner said the man preached a good sermon Sunday night to kick off the revival. God used it to start a wave of revival in the town that people still talk about today.

"No one came forward during the invitation," said Turner of that night. "But sitting on the front pew next to me was an old deacon - a good old man - who had had a formal relationship with the church all of this life. I looked over at him during the invitation, and there was a tear running out of one of his eyes. I was stunned. I thought surely his



Emil Turner points to a Medieval map that hangs in his office at the Baptist building in Little Rock.

eye was watering or he had a cold. He never said a word. The invitation ended, (and) everybody went home.

"But the next morning, I got a phone call from the bank. He was president of a little local bank. A teller with the bank called me and said, 'Mr. Arthur didn't open the bank this morning on time. He called all of us in, and he witnessed to us and told us that if we hadn't been saved that we needed to be saved and that we were to come to the revival at his church and be saved.'"

Turner said word spread like wildfire across the community.

"That night the church was filled. The service was to start at 6 (that night). By 5:15 or so it was full. People were making decisions during the invitation, before we got to the invitation," he recalled.

"There were people in the next year that would drive by the church and would come in and say that God had told them to come in and to get saved."

Events of the revival at Harrisonburg still resonate with Turner today.

"There were people that were hardened ... desperate sinners that got saved," he said. "I think because that deacon yielded and did what God showed him to do, He used him. ... It was just unbelievable."

Church's preeminence

Experiencing God at work at places like Harrisonburg then and Arkansas Baptist churches today is why Turner believes so strongly in the work of the local church.

In Arkansas, that means a lot of small, Southern Baptist churches.

"I have said for several years, if you are going to be saved in Arkansas, it's important that you live close to one of our small churches," said Turner. "Now, our large churches are wonderful, and I thank God for them, but the majority of people baptized in Arkansas are in smaller membership churches."

"And those smaller membership churches have the ability to be rela-

tional; any church member can have the pastor's attention and focus, and they have a tremendous mission field and I'm grateful for them."

Today's cultural diversity makes relationships and the church's role in being "counter culture" perhaps more important than ever, he said.

"Culture has always been opposed to the gospel and the work of God. Culture has never been our friend, and it will never be our friend."

"In order to be effective for Jesus Christ, you must always counter culture," said Turner.

"There is never a cultural reason to be ashamed of being a Christian, to be ashamed of being a Baptist. Culture is never going to help you enlarge the kingdom. We need to embrace that truth. It is better that the kingdom of God be counter culture."

Leadership in the SBC

Turner's ministry experiences and leadership style seem to have won him friends among other Baptist state executives. This past February he was elected president of the Fellowship of State Executive Directors for 2011-12. As president, Turner will preside over the group's 2012 meeting in Phoenix, Ariz.

"His clear-headed thinking and ability to cut to the center of issues sets him apart from many," said Anthony Jordan, executive director of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma.

"Emil demonstrates a passion for reaching the lost world. You can't be around him long without sensing his broken heart over a broken world. I have always admired the deep love he has for Arkansas Baptists."

David Hankins, executive director of the Louisiana Baptist Convention, said Turner has a "sense of balance that is a sign of mature leadership and wisdom."

"His strong conviction about biblical truth and its effective proclamation is balanced by his willingness to listen respectfully to viewpoints that

Former Ouachita coach dies

FAYETTEVILLE - Former Ouachita Baptist University Coach Buddy Benson, 77, a member of the Arkansas Sports Hall of Fame, died April 22.

Benson was the head football coach at Ouachita from 1965-95. He was one of the winningest coaches in Arkansas college football history. Benson became



Benson

athletics director at Ouachita upon his retirement from coaching and served in that capacity until 1998.

Prior to his coaching career, Benson was best known as a running back for the Arkansas Razorbacks. He was a member of the famed 1954 Southwest Conference championship team.

The secret of my success

A number of years ago I noticed an advertisement for the movie, "The Secret of My Success." I'll have to admit that I've never seen the movie and really don't know what it is about, but the title of the movie really caught my eye at the time and got me to thinking.

As Christians, we really don't have any claim to success apart from having Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior.

However, we don't just become Christians one day, do we? For many people reading this column, the journey to professing Christ was greatly influenced through family members.

Both my father and mother had a tremendous impact on my spiritual journey and were key players in my life up until the point I surrendered my life to Christ in 1970.

With Mother's Day this month, I want to talk a bit about my mother.

We had a good laugh in the ABN office a few weeks ago after I made a comment about traveling to Northeast Arkansas to be a part of the Mississippi County Baptist Association mission fair and to speak at a church in the association.

Smiling, I said: "I won't need to get a hotel room because I'll be staying at my mother's house in Malden, Missouri. She has the best bed and breakfast in Southeast Missouri."

An ABN staffer said with all seriousness, "I didn't know your mother owned a bed and breakfast!"

After a good laugh, the staffer understood exactly what I meant and added, "Ah, that's so sweet to say that about your mom!"

Moms are special. Moms love their children unconditionally. Moms are slow to point out our faults (most of the time unless it has to do with a dirty bedroom). Moms are our biggest fans. In my case, my mom is a big reason for my success!

By success, I don't mean any success in business or ministry. I mean the success I have found in

trusting the Lord with my life.

My mother – June Wingfield Yarbrough – was the first person I told of my decision to follow Jesus. I might have walked the aisle during revival services at Walnut Street Baptist Church in Jonesboro later

that night, but I was saved on 702 Strawn St. when my mother prayed with me at the foot of her bed.

If you are fortunate enough to still have your

mother living, you know exactly what I mean when I say, "God gave us mothers so we could experience a little bit of His nature every day of our lives."

My mother is an amazing and incredibly strong woman.

At age 11, when a lot of girls were still playing with dolls, my mother lost her mother to illness and was sent off to boarding school with her two sisters.

During extremely difficult financial circumstances on the farm in Missouri, and later with a moving

business franchise in Jonesboro, I saw my mother juggle, with great integrity, three important jobs: wife, mother of three rambunctious boys, and business manager.

And on top of all that, she would occasionally work at Gibson's Discount to help with expenses and to buy the "extra

things" we boys needed.

Through it all, my mother has always been an exemplary Christian lady and cheerleader for her family, whom she loves dearly.

This Mother's Day, take time to do something really special for your mom; if you're like me, she's a big part of the "secret of your success!"



PRESSING ON

Tim Yarbrough



My mother, June Yarbrough, with her three sons, from left: David, Mike and Tim, in the mid 1970s.

Thanks to the ABN

Thank you for continuing to keep us good 'ole Baptist(s) informed and lifted up. My husband and I read the paper at home, and then he takes it to work. He manages a tuxedo rental shop, and while

customers are waiting while parties try on tuxes, he is always in hopes that those waiting will pick up the paper and read it! I am so thankful that we both work in (a) business where we can

share our faith and talk about God and our precious Savior without

fear of losing our jobs!! We live in such a crazy world, and anytime we can mention what God has done for us, (it) is one tiny step for Him! Keep up the good work, and we pray that you continue to share with us!! God bless each of you and your team!

Randi Wright

Leonard Street Baptist Church,
Hot Springs

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A Tribute to Godly Fathers ABN Father of the Year Contest

Arkansas Baptists, write a brief tribute (300 words or less) about your father or another worthy father. The ABN will recognize the winner in his local church and present him with a gift, as well as highlight his tribute in the June 16 issue.

Send your tribute by June 2, along with your phone number and/or email address, your father's name and what church he attends to Father of the Year Contest, Arkansas Baptist News, 10 Remington Drive, Little Rock, AR 72204, or email to tim@arkansasbaptist.org.



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Letters may be edited for style. A letters policy statement is available on request. Opinions expressed in letters are those of the writer alone and publication should not be considered an endorsement.

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Baptists Ask

Our church is currently in a financial bind. What can we do?

Churches across the country face important financial decisions. Each church must deal carefully with its own financial situation, and it should do so openly and with the utmost of discernment. A “quick fix” may cause regret later.

A church must first learn the reason for its financial downturn. If an area employer has closed its doors, several members may currently be out of work. The economic downturn may have caused members to be “top-heavy” on a home loan. Others may see gifts to the church as an optional luxury instead of a necessity.

Regardless of a member’s decreased financial giving, the church can be of service. Numerous faith-based stewardship and money programs are available for churches to use. These can help Christians learn how to manage their smaller salaries, create wise budgets and foster Christian stewardship.

If the church income has changed, the church budget must also change. A church simply cannot spend what it does not have. Budgets are not “hewn in stone;” they can be changed throughout the year as needs warrant. Budget managers must learn to spend wisely. The church should review, at least on an annual basis, all of its line items. When “sacred cows” become “boondoggles,” the church should seriously consider what must be done. Fiscal responsibility is every church member’s job.

Remember, however, that little changes can also be beneficial. Turning off lights when not in use, being frugal with supplies and adjusting the thermostat to a more conservative temperature can save hundreds – even thousands – of dollars per year.

None of these financial decisions are easy, and they all require much thought and prayer. It is immensely helpful if church members ask, “Will this decision glorify the Lord?” Even during a financial crisis, a church can actually grow closer and become more unified.

Editor’s note: We invite readers to submit questions regarding theology and Baptist beliefs. Send questions to Editor, Arkansas Baptist News, 10 Remington Drive, Little Rock, AR 72204 or email tim@arkansasbaptist.org.

Ken Gore is chair of the Williams Baptist College department of Christian ministries.



Light in darkness

During the 1800s in Birmingham, England, a little boy went to one of the newly-formed Sunday schools for children. The teacher taught the children that day and said, “Jesus is the Light of the world.” Not realizing the symbolic phraseology of the teacher, the little boy came up to her after class and said, “Teacher, if this Mr. Jesus really is the Light of the world, I wish He’d come and visit the street by my house. It’s awful dark where I live.”

Darkness is prevalent throughout our state and our world. The darkness of sin is in your community and in the streets of your town. While darkness surrounds many of our churches in Arkansas, the light of the gospel must not be allowed to grow dim. The light of the gospel of Jesus grows dim in our churches when we forget that in our churches there is but one celebrity – and His name is Jesus.

Have you noticed how too many of our churches are being built on the wrong foundations? Some of our churches are making celebrities out of the wrong things. For example, some churches are being built around a pastor. The guy has charisma, people skills

and can really preach. However, nothing that will last beyond the pastor is being built. Other churches are built around the decision making of a group of people. These are people who have appointed themselves as the final word in all things related to the church. They have established themselves as the ruling council on all things. Some of our churches are building their ministry around a program. For them, it is the music program that is the focus of the church, or it is the student ministry or some other program that has become the end all in the church’s ministry.

The reality is that out there in the darkness where real people live, there is but one Light that can change lives and that one Light is Jesus! If you have even one celebrity in your church who is taking focus away from Jesus and His mission, then the light of the gospel will grow dim. Let’s elevate Jesus to the highest place once again in our churches. It was Jesus who said, “But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself” (John 12:32). Let’s lift up Jesus crucified, buried and risen again so that people in darkness will be drawn to His light.



PRESIDENT’S PERSPECTIVE

Clay Hallmark

‘The Radical Disciple’

by John Stott, InterVarsity Press, 2010

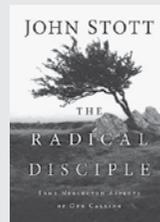
There seems to be a lot of discussion lately on blogs and Web sites about the quality of “disciple” our churches are turning out. Most believe that the quality could be much better. John Stott, the long-time British pastor and theologian agrees. In this, his latest (and his last) book, he highlights some areas for the church to focus on to help believers become the surrendered followers of Christ that God expects.

Stott focuses on eight areas, none of which are really surprising. They include Christlikeness, maturity, simplicity, balance and dependence, as well as some others. But he also adds a couple that we, as church leaders, many times overlook.

One of these is his chapter titled “Death.” Jesus speaks often of “dying to self,” “losing your life to find

it” and other ideas involving giving up our desires and goals to attain God’s purpose for our lives. Why, then, do we not understand what Paul meant when he said, “to live is Christ; to die is gain?” As believers, we are no different than most unbelievers when it comes to dying. We fight it with everything we have, even to the point of fearing the passing over to our eternal reward. Stott uses the example of believers in areas of the world where persecution is rampant. They do not fear death. Martyrdom is a part of life. But we in the Western church don’t live life with an eternal focus. As Stott is approaching 90, these types of topics take on new meaning.

This is a very good book. No new revelations, really, but it helps us refocus on what’s most important in our quest to help believers become “fully devoted followers.”



BOOK REVIEW

Penna Dexter
Amazon.com

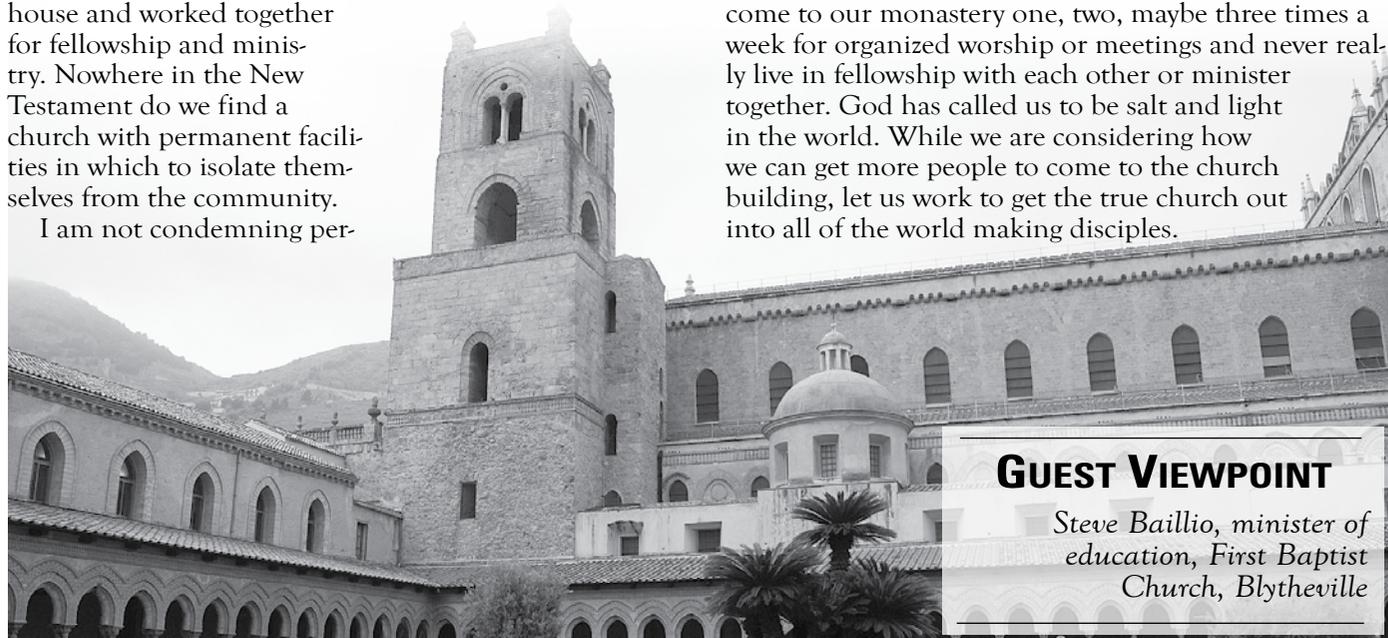
Monastery or ministry?

Have you ever asked, “How can we get more people to come to church?” That may be the wrong question. Maybe we should be asking, “How do we get more churchgoers ministering outside the four walls of the church?”

The early church described in Acts 2 was a church that met from house to house and worked together for fellowship and ministry. Nowhere in the New Testament do we find a church with permanent facilities in which to isolate themselves from the community.

I am not condemning per-

manent facilities unless they become such a financial burden or social barricade that they hinder ministry. The church has taken the tradition of church buildings and developed an isolationist colony within it. We have, in effect, become a monastery with no dorm rooms. At least, in a real monastery, the residents can fellowship together daily because they live together. We come to our monastery one, two, maybe three times a week for organized worship or meetings and never really live in fellowship with each other or minister together. God has called us to be salt and light in the world. While we are considering how we can get more people to come to the church building, let us work to get the true church out into all of the world making disciples.



GUEST VIEWPOINT

Steve Baillio, minister of education, First Baptist Church, Blytheville

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Ten minutes to better health

Kelli Snow Preston
HomeLife

EXERCISE IS ESSENTIAL to good health. Yet, most Americans, especially women, don't come close to getting the 30 minutes of daily physical activity that health experts recommend. Why? Lack of time is the No. 1 reason.

Good news: There are many ways to reap the benefits of exercise without giving your day to it. So lace up your shoes and get moving. "Something is better than nothing; more is better than something" is the motto of Ruth Ann Carpenter of the Cooper Institute in Dallas, Texas, a center for studying the relationship between living habits and health. According to Carpenter, numerous scientific studies show that exercising for 10 minutes, three times a day — versus 30 minutes at one time — has many of the same health benefits if the workout intensity is the same.

Performed regularly, these stints of physical activity provide numerous benefits to our body, mind and spirit, including a reduced risk of heart disease, type 2 diabetes and various types of cancer, lowered weight, improved ability to manage stress, improved sleep and increased adherence to exercise.

Still unmotivated? Practice thinking about exercising as often as you do about eating.

Next step: Don't just think — do. If you eat at least three times a day, why not determine to exercise for the same amount of time?

Need some non-gym suggestions for getting in 10 minutes of exercise, three times a day? We've got 11 non-gym suggestions.

1. Slow abdominal crunches.

Lie on the floor with your heels on a chair, and form a 90-degree angle with your legs. Cradle your head with your hands (don't pull on your head when you lift). Use your abdominal muscles to slowly raise your shoulder blades off the floor. Hold for a few seconds, then return to the starting position.

2. Take a walk.

3. Take the stairs.

4. Don't sit on the sidelines. While your children are at sports practice, don't just sit there — take a brisk walk around the field.

5. Take advantage of the seasons. Shovel snow in the winter, rake leaves in the fall, pull weeds in the spring and swim laps in the summer.

6. Walk while you talk — around your house or around your block.

7. Save gas and move. Walk or jog to the corner store, park farther away from the mall or the office and get off the subway or bus a few stops early and walk to your destination.

8. Clean house.

9. Get into the groove. Turn on some music, gather the kids and have a dance party.

10. Do a TV tone-up. Do jumping jacks or leg lifts on commercial breaks of a TV episode.

11. Walk while you wait. If time allows, take a walk around the building instead of just sitting and waiting for an appointment.

Believe it or not, you do have time to exercise. Just 10 minutes of activity at a time will get your heart pumping and your muscles working. And better health is bound to result.

Kelly Snow Preston is a consultant for health promotion and health ministry initiatives for various companies in Lebanon, Ohio.

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Preparedness is key to disaster safety

WITH THE CHANGE of the calendar from winter to spring comes a change of weather. A warm and sunny day in the South can quickly transform into a cloudy and rainy one – sometimes accompanied with flash floods, high winds and even tornadoes.

Fortunately, today's weather forecasting technology allows for predictions to be made days in advance. As people hear of approaching storms, they are able to take cover and focus on safety.

NEA Baptist Memorial Hospital works to prepare for many of life's circumstances. This spring the hospital will participate in two disaster preparedness exercises.

The first is The Great Central U.S. ShakeOut April 28. The second is the Federal Emergency Management Agency's National Level Exercise.

The Great Central U.S. ShakeOut drill is a nationwide program designed to show participants how

to perform "Drop, Cover, and Hold On" – a quake-safe action designed to protect people from falling furniture and objects that may become projectiles during ground shaking.

Every employee at the hospital will participate in this drill to make them think about what they will do and where they will find cover during an earthquake. The goal is for the employees to think about their actions and actually perform them so they can be available to assist our patients and the community.

The National Level Exercise 2011 is a White House-directed, Congressionally-mandated exercise that focuses on regional catastrophic response and recovery activities between federal, regional, state, local and private sector participants.

This year the exercise will focus on the response of the various participants to a major earthquake in the New Madrid Seismic Zone. This year

is the bicentennial anniversary of the 1811 New Madrid earthquake. This is the first time the national drill has simulated a natural hazard. Scenarios will be enacted to test response procedures, care, communications and other elements of disaster recovery. Key findings will be evaluated to enhance hospital

response preparedness.

Preparation is the key to dealing with any type of disaster. The principles practiced in these hospital drills can be applied to many other hazards. Just as we are focusing on these national safety drills, now is a great time to review your personal safety plans.

BAPTIST PROFILE

Deaundra Waddell
NEA Baptist
Memorial Hospital

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Unhindered!

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us." Hebrews 12:1-2

Registration opens May 1!

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Baseball field services

Tri-County Baptist Association has begun holding worship services on Sundays at baseball fields in Jonesboro for families who are in town for weekend baseball games and cannot attend church.

ABN Mother of the Year tribute

BELOW IS THE winning *Arkansas Baptist News* Mother of the Year tribute, which was written by Lindsey Byrd, 12, to honor her grandmother, Lisa Byrd.

Lisa, who is a member of First Baptist Church, Harrisburg, was

selected as the 2011 Mother of the Year.

Be sure to check out the May 22 issue of the ABN, which will feature excerpts from several of this year's Mother of the Year tribute submissions.

	3-11-11
Dear Sirs,	
My name is Lindsey Byrd. I'm 12 years old and I would like to enter my NANA in the Mother's Day Contest. She is our grandmother but she adopted me, my sister and my brother to give us the best life she could.	
We are all members of the First Baptist Church in Harrisburg, AR. NANA helps in Pioneer Club on Wednesday nights. She has for two years now and she keeps the nursery on Sundays. She says she is Blessed with the love of children. God has been good to us and we thank Him for our NANA every day. With out her no telling what would have happened to us by now.	
She makes sure we do good in school and we never miss Church and she just loves us for being us. She says shes Blessed, we say we are. NANA is disabled now with alot of stuff wrong with her, but she never quits. She works as a Subteach at our school, cooks our meals, washes our clothes and runs us every where for school and after school stuff. Our NANA is the best Mother any one can have and she'll always be number 1 mom to us.	
Thank you Lindsey, Leah & Austin Byrd	

Williams Baptist College graduation set for May 7

WALNUT RIDGE – More than 90 graduates are expected to receive their diplomas during baccalaureate and commencement exercises Saturday, May 7, on the campus of Williams Baptist College in Walnut Ridge.

The speaker for Williams' graduation is Bruce Swihart, pastor of

Barcelona Road Baptist Church, Hot Springs Village. Swihart will be honored as the college's 2011 Distinguished Baptist Minister.

Williams combines its baccalaureate and commencement services. The ceremony will begin at 10 a.m. in the college's Southerland-Mabee Center.

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To place your business in the monthly Church Service Directory, contact Nelle at 501-376-4791 ext. 5155 or nelle@arkansasbaptist.org.

Milestones

Ardell Polk recently celebrated his 20th anniversary as pastor of First Baptist Church, Rector. Polk and his wife, Rosemarie, were surprised at the monthly church fellowship with a cake and gifts.

Church life

Jenny Lind First Baptist Church, Greenwood, will host a "van/bus/youth/adult safe driving day" from 9 a.m. to noon May 21. The event will include a class on driving high-profile vehicles like 18-wheel tractor-trailers, have certified mechanics available to check church vans, include safe driving tips from police and important vehicle information provided by "first responders." For more information, call 479-597-0382.

Central Baptist Church, North Little Rock, will host Testify in concert June 5.

South Side Baptist Church, Fort Smith, will host Kathryn Overturf in concert May 8.

Central Baptist Church, North Little Rock, will host the Breanne Benefit at 7 p.m. May 6. The gospel singing is held in celebration of the life of Breanne, who died of cancer just before her 11th birthday.

Jenny Lind First Baptist Church, Greenwood, will hold a Season of Revival May 8-11, featuring preaching by Sam Cathey and music by Sounds of Hope. For more information, visit <http://fbcjl.org/>.

Trinity Baptist Association will host the TBA Youth Wipeout in Harrisburg at 11 a.m. May 21. The event will include egghead jousting, volleyball, glow-in-the-dark dodge ball, obstacle courses and more. For more information, contact Tyler Isbell at 870-273-8331.

North Pulaski Baptist Association will host its annual golf tournament at Hickory Creek Golf Course in Jacksonville May 16. For more information, contact Bobby Coe at 501-425-5135.

Crossgate Church, Hot Springs, will host the Annual Fishing Derby from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. May 14. The event will include prizes, a winner's trophy and an optional lunch. Ages 5 and older are welcome. Children under 16 must have adult supervision. For more information, contact Eddie Walker at elwalker443@yahoo.com.

First Baptist Church, Dumas,

will host Jeff Slaughter, a songwriter/worship leader, in concert May 14. The event will start at 5 p.m. with a "Vacation Bible school Feast," including pizza, hot dogs and pretzels - foods that represent New York City, this year's VBS theme. The concert will start at 6:45 p.m. The following day, Slaughter will present the VBS musical with the church's children's choir.

Obituaries

Lonnie Gibbons of North Little Rock died April 14 after a 15-year battle with cancer. Reared in Mississippi and Missouri, Gibbons held multiple television and radio jobs, including positions in Arkansas at KARK and KTHV. He retired from KTHV in 1996 when he was first diagnosed with cancer. He started a cancer support group at Park Hill Baptist Church, North Little Rock, where he was a member, and he helped other churches start groups, as well. Survivors include his wife of 56 years, Joyce Gibbons; three children; two sisters; seven grandchildren; a grandson-in-law; and a great-grandchild due in August. A celebration service was held at Park Hill Baptist April 18. Memorials may be made to the Park Hill Baptist Cancer Support Group, 201 E. C Ave., North Little Rock, AR 72116.

On the move

Joe Jackson has retired as pastor of Sidney Baptist Church, Sidney.

Ordinations

First Baptist Church, Helena, recently ordained David Dunigan as a deacon.

ABN Blind Tape Ministry

provides a free taped recording of the *Arkansas Baptist News* for people who are legally blind.

For more information or to sign up, please contact Becky at 800-838-2272 (in state) or in Little Rock at 501-376-4791, ext. 5156.



Beth Moore in North Little Rock

Arkadelphia native Beth Moore (above) spoke to thousands of women at Living Proof Live 2011, held April 15-16 at Verizon Arena in North Little Rock. Photo by Becky Hardwick

Arkansas Master'Singers Memorial Scholarship

Application forms are now available for the Master'Singers Memorial Scholarship, which is awarded annually to a student who is preparing for some type of vocational ministry through music. The scholarship is established to memorialize deceased members of the Arkansas Master'Singers. Funds for the \$2000 scholarship are received in the form of memorial gifts and freewill offerings at concerts presented by the Master'Singers. Application forms and additional information may be downloaded from our website: www.absc.org/music or by contacting Nancy Rose at the Leadership & Worship Team of ABSC, ph. 1-800-838-2272, ext. 5121.

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TURNER

continued from page three

differ from his," Hankins added.

Referring to Turner's leadership in the executive director's fellowship, Alabama Baptist Convention State Board of Missions executive director Rick Lance added:

"This is a position (of) leadership crucial to our unified work, especially during these challenging times. Emil is providing the kind of guidance we need as we look toward the future," said Lance.

"Having served in that position, I know that there are numerous ways in which the president is called upon behind the scenes to assist fellow state convention leaders from all over the country, and he is called upon to speak for us as a group," Lance continued. "This is where Emil Turner serves so well. He knows how to handle these kinds of challenges."

Challenges ahead

Through his leadership, Turner is working to help Arkansas Baptists as they serve as witnesses for Jesus Christ in the diverse cultural landscape of the 21st century.

One of the biggest challenges Turner sees is really quite simple – those who support the work of the church financially are aging.

"People who tithe are older people, and they are dying out. I'm a big evangelist when it comes to tithing," he said. "If he (a pastor) has been preaching on tithing and stewardship the past three or four years, he's in a better position to weather this recession than (a pastor) who has not done that. ... You've got to raise up a new set of tithers."

Turner said while some Southern Baptists today seem to be struggling with the idea of cooperation, he predicts a return to more cooperation in the years to come.

"I believe there will be a reinvention of cooperation in the next 10 years," he explained. "I think the pendulum will swing back from, 'What my church can do,' to, 'What can our churches do?'"

And it will be fueled by a desire to be obedient to the Great Commission.

"A group of younger preachers are going to look at where they are in 10 years and say, 'We really haven't made any more progress in fulfilling the Great Commission,'" said Turner. "(They'll say), 'We've had some tremendous impact on some communities; we've had mission trips; we've had involvement in missions; but we can't say we've moved the ball down the field in a substantial way, (and) we're going to go back to cooperating to do it.'"

Contact Tim Yarbrough at tim@arkansasbaptist.org.

Get to know your state exec.

What are you currently reading?

"I've been reading through Thucydides (Greek historian). I read a lot of history. I have a lot of interest in Medieval (history). Thucydides and the Greek Peloponnesian War have been holding my attention lately. I've found a lot of sermon illustrations in there."

What Bible character have you patterned your ministry after?

"If I had to identify with a Bible character, I'm probably like the man whose child had a demon when Jesus and the three came down from the Mount of Trans-

figuration (Mark 9:14-29). He said, 'Lord, if you can do anything, heal my son.' And Jesus said, 'If you can. All things are possible for those who believe,' and the man said, 'Lord, I believe, help me in my unbelief.' I identify with that man. So much of my progress in the Lord, I'm ashamed to say, so much of it is crisis-driven. While I am a believer, I always need to believe more."

What's your favorite scripture?

"John 15:8--(By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be My disciples)."

Classifieds

PASTOR

Clarendon First Baptist Church seeks **full-time pastor**. Send resumes to First Baptist Church, Box 324, Clarendon, AR 72029.

Evening Shade First Baptist Church of Evening Shade, Ark., is accepting resumes for **pastor**. Will consider a full-time or bi-vocational pastor. Please send resumes to Frank Gay, 9 Arkansas Hwy. 115, Cave City, AR 72521, or email to fullcircle73@yahoo.com.

Small, rural, non-traditional Baptist church seeking **bi-vocational pastor**. Send resumes to Koinonia Christian Fellowship, Box 386, Imboden, AR 72434.

Southern Baptist church seeking **bi-vocational pastor**; parsonage available if needed. Please send resume to Cocklebur Baptist Church, 4138 Cocklebur Road, Ward, AR 72176.

Cherry Street Baptist Church is currently seeking a **pastor**. CSBC is located in Clarksville, Ark., a city of 9,600 residents in Johnson County, where over 19,000 people reside. We have a loving, Christ-centered congregation and a beautiful sanctuary with a Sunday morning attendance of over 40. Our sanctuary accommodates approximately 250. We also have many classrooms to accommodate growth. The pastor's salary is \$40,000, plus a two-bedroom parsonage located next to CSBC. The University of Ozarks and downtown Clarksville are three blocks from CSBC. Staff includes a part-time secretary, nursery worker and custodian. We are praying for a God-called pastor who is willing to follow the lead of the Holy Spirit in a variety of possible ministries. Send resumes to P.O. Box 378, Clarksville, AR 72830 or dstandri@suddenlink.net.

First Baptist Church, Unionville, Mo., a dispensational, fundamentally conservative church, is prayerfully seeking an experienced **full-time senior pastor**. Send resume and detailed doctrinal statement to 104 N. 15th, Unionville, MO 63565, or email to fbcc-unionville@hotmail.com.

Southern Baptist church seeking **bi-vocational pastor**; parsonage available if needed. Please send resume to the attention of Bonnie Wilbanks at First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 117, Gillett, AR 72055.

Salem Baptist Church, Stephens, Ark., is seeking a **bi-vocational pastor**. Please send resume to John Moore, 1454 N. 1st St., Stephens, AR 71764.

New Hope Baptist Church, Jay, Okla., is seeking a **full-time pastor**. Please send resume to NHBC, P.O. Box 1846 Jay, OK 74346, or email to info@newhopejay.com. Phone: 918-253-3985. Web: www.newhopejay.com.

OTHER STAFF POSITIONS

Elliott Baptist Church in Camden, Ark., is looking for a **bi-vocational youth pastor**. Incredible facilities, with gymnasium. Excellent opportunity in a growing church. Call 870-231 6411 or 479-883-

0380. Email tabrown23@yahoo.com.

Full-time minister of students/director of family life at First Baptist Church, Blytheville, Ark. Send resumes to Search Committee, P.O. Box 1863, Blytheville, AR 72316, or email to normjenkins@sbcglobal.net.

Central Baptist Church of North Little Rock, Ark., is seeking a **full-time minister of youth** and a **full-time minister of administration and education**. Please send resumes and inquiries to wym-an@cbcnr.org.

The Washington Madison Baptist Association in Northwest Arkansas is seeking a **full-time associational missionary**. Please send resumes to WMBA, 1925 Green Acres Road, Fayetteville, AR 72703, or email amresume@wmbaonline.net by May 31.

FBC Harrisburg (www.harrisburgfbc.com) is looking for a **part-time music minister** for our two worship services on Sunday. For more information, contact Pastor Kelly Jones at 870-344-0173 or kellyjones@rittermail.com.

Bayou Meto Baptist Church, Jacksonville, Ark., is accepting resumes for **part-time music director**. Resumes may be sent to bayoumeto@centurytel.net or Bayou Meto Baptist Church, Attn: Music Search Team, 26200 Highway 107, Jacksonville, AR 72076.

Immanuel Baptist Church is seeking a **bi-vocational minister of music and youth**. Send resume to 2201 S. Dallas, Fort Smith, AR 72901. Call 479-782-1009, or visit www.immanuelbaptistsf.org.

Trinity Baptist Church, Searcy is seeking a **full-time student minister**. If interested, send resume to 1601 East Moore, Searcy, AR 72143.

First Baptist Church, Forrest City, is seeking a **full-time minister of music**. If interested, send resume to 507 N. Rosser St., Forrest City, AR 72335.

Barcelona Road Baptist Church (SBC), Hot Springs Village, seeking **part-time organist** Wednesdays and Sundays. Salary range: \$9,000-\$10,000 for qualified person. Contact 501-922-0692 or brbc3music@att.net.

MISCELLANEOUS

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• **May 31, 2011 First Baptist Church, Fayetteville**
Lunch served 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.
11:10 - 11:30 a.m. Presentation
12:10-12:30 p.m. Repeat presentation

• **May 31, 2011 East Side Baptist Church, Mountain Home**
Evening meal 5:30 - 6:45 p.m.
6:45-7:15 p.m. Presentation

• **June 1, 2011 Central Baptist Church, Jonesboro**
Lunch served 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.
11:10 - 11:30 a.m. Presentation
12:10-12:30 p.m. Repeat presentation

• **June 2, 2011 Baptist building, Little Rock**
Lunch served 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.
11:10 - 11:30 a.m. Presentation
12:10-12:30 p.m. Repeat presentation

• **June 2, 2011 Baptist Building, Little Rock**
Evening meal 5:30 - 6:45 p.m.
6:45-7:15 p.m. Presentation

• **June 3, 2011 Southwest Baptist Association office, Texarkana**
Lunch served 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.
11:10 - 11:30 a.m. Presentation
12:10-12:30 p.m. Repeat presentation

Get set

It's been a long time since I've waterskied, but in my younger (much younger) days, I used to love it. I remember how, when I was about to move across the wave created by the motor, I would have to set my knees. I'd bend them slightly and lock them in position. If I didn't do this, when I hit the wake, I would quickly lose my balance and fall. I am sure that it was not a pretty sight. Usually these

falls included drinking lake water and what I called an instant headache. I learned the importance of

setting my knees if I was going to stay up and ski for any length of time.

Colossians 3:1-17 is titled "Rules for Holy Living" in my Bible. In verse 1, Paul admonishes us to set our hearts on things above

and in verse 2 to set our minds on things above. These are intentional

EXPLORE THE BIBLE MAY 15, 2011

Frances Raley
minister of adult education
First Baptist Church, Benton

Scripture passage:
Colossians 3:1-17

Do you practice what you preach? Most of us would admit our deficiencies because we know no one is perfect. A more challenging question is, "Would you dare preach what you practice?" Studying God's Word is not solely for informational purposes. God's Word is supposed to have a direct impact on our daily lives. James tells us we should not only listen to God's Word, but also do what it says (James 1:22).

The Persian king Artaxerxes gave Ezra permission to travel from Babylon to Jerusalem. There was a 57-year gap between the completion of the temple and the arrival of Ezra. Dur-

ing this time, the people of God had fallen into sin. As a skilled scribe in the Law of God, Ezra was convicted to lead his people back to God by teaching them God's Word.

Ezra's plan was fourfold. He prepared his heart, studied God's law, obeyed God's law and taught the people God's law.

First, he prepared his heart (v. 10a). This means that Ezra was committed to the task. He was faithful to answer the call of God, and he was committed to being equipped from God's Word.

Secondly, Ezra studied God's law, even becoming an expert (v. 10b-11).

Be faithful

In this final section of the Book of Colossians, it almost seems like Paul had so much he wanted to say that he jumped from topic to topic. It brought back a memory I hadn't thought of in years. I was at the home of one of my dearest friends the first day she let her daughter ride the bus to school by herself. As she put Anna's coat on, she was spouting off directions to her. Now do this;

don't do this; if I'm not here when you get home,

you can go to this neighbor; recite our phone number back to me; don't talk to strangers; and on and on she went. She was anxious to give her daughter all the information she would need as she sent her off alone for the first time. Poor Anna's mind was probably whirling

as she got on the bus that day - excited, but probably scared out of her wits.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE MAY 22, 2011

Frances Raley
minister of adult education
First Baptist Church, Benton

Scripture passage:
Colossians 3:18-4:18

First Corinthians 4:5 brings back memories of when I first became a Christian. I wasn't raised in an evangelical church. The hell-fire and brimstone preaching was quite frightening. I can remember the first time I heard the preacher say, "All the sins you ever committed will be on a huge screen for all to see in the judgment!" I didn't like that prospect at all.

First Corinthians says in part, "For He will bring our darkest secrets to light and will reveal our private motives" (v. 5, NLT). I have to be perfectly honest. This Bible passage didn't help my anxiety. I have done things, said things and had thoughts

I don't want anyone to know about. Why? All these things would cause me shame, humiliation and embarrassment. We all have said things, done things and thought things we don't want anyone to know about.

Look at the last part of the verse, "Then God will give to each one whatever praise is due."

That is not what you expect. You almost expect condemnation or a judgment statement at this point. Why isn't it there? Paul gives us the answer: "So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:1, NLT).

What a relief! There will be no big screen and no public shame, hu-

umiliation or embarrassment. That is why Paul says in verse five, "Then God will give to each one whatever praise is due." Not condemnation, but praise! When Paul says "darkest secrets" and "private motives," he is not talking about evil and sin. He is basically referring to what is "not known" to man.

The Christians at Corinth acted like they were the judges in the last day. They could not possibly have

The word in the original Hebrew is "seek." It meant to expound or seek the meaning. We study God's Word

to learn about Him and better our relationship with Him.

Ezra also obeyed God's Word (v. 10c). Ezra could preach what he practiced. Spiritual maturity and Christian leadership are connected to our understanding and relationship to God's Word. It is impossible to grow, serve and succeed

as Christians apart from a commitment to God's Word (Josh. 1:8). Lastly, Ezra taught the people of God (v. 10d). You can't teach what you haven't learned, and you will never teach effectively if you don't practice what you have learned. Ezra followed the right steps in the right order. His walk with God is a good example for us to follow.

Paul knew that the Christians in Colossae were going to take a beating if they didn't have some instructions and encouragement. Satan plays dirty. His playground is our minds, and if I don't have my mind set on Christ, I am going to quickly lose focus. My thoughts, then, affect my heart, which are my emotions and my actions.

It reassures me when I read Psalm 103:14, which says, "For He knows how we are formed."

Walk with God

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE MAY 15, 2011

Gerald Nash, member
Second Baptist Church, Conway

Scripture passages:
Ezra 7:9-11

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Lastly, Ezra taught the people of God (v. 10d). You can't teach what you haven't learned, and you will never teach effectively if you don't practice what you have learned. Ezra followed the right steps in the right order. His walk with God is a good example for us to follow.

Every remark revolved around relationships. We are not meant to do this life alone. We need people. Proverbs 27:17 says, "As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another." We need to be open and willing to establish relationships with people that we come in contact with so that we might share the gospel message. 2 Timothy 4:2 says, "Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage - with great patience and careful instruction."

May we have this same fervor that Paul had as we see a world in need of Christ.

Pursue God's agenda

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE MAY 22, 2011

Gerald Nash, member
Second Baptist Church, Conway

Scripture passages:
1 Corinthians 4:1-5

known the secrets and private motivations of others. Their judgments were not for the edification of the individual or the church. Their agendas and motivations were rooted in pride.

As Christians, we should remember there is "no condemnation for those who are in Christ." Paul's agenda was one of pleasing God, not men. Our agenda should be to please God, encourage the saints and edify the church.

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NEWS DIGEST

'Resurrection iWitness' app released

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) - LifeWay Christian Resources has released "Resurrection iWitness," an iPad app, into Apple's App Store.

Aaron Linne, executive producer of digital marketing for LifeWay's B&H Publishing Group, said the interactive experience takes people through the collection of evidence for the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The background for the app comes from author and designer Doug Powell, who previously published the Holman Quick Source Guide to Christian Apologetics.

The Resurrection iWitness app was "designed for the rising generation to explore information in their native experience," Linne said. The app challenges users "to scientifically look at the evidence presented and decide for themselves after taking an investigative journalistic approach to discover the truth about Christ," Linne said.

The app is "a great plug-and-play resource," he said, for people to talk about the resurrection "across a coffee table or on a big-screen church presentation."

Hawkins books free to Kindle e-readers

DALLAS - GuideStone has made seven of GuideStone President O.S. Hawkins' books available for free download to Kindle e-readers.

The titles available include "Antology," "Drawing the Net," "Getting Down to Brass Tacks," "GuideStones: Ancient Landmarks of Authenticity for the 21st Century Church," "High Calling, High Anxiety," "More Good News for Great

Days" and "The Pastor's Primer."

To download any of these titles free to a Kindle e-reader, visit GuideStone's Web site, www.GuideStone.org/MinistryTools/OnlineBooks.aspx, and click on the title to download.

Gay students protest Wright's degree

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) - Some University of South Carolina students say the school should not award an honorary doctorate to Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) president Bryant Wright because of his and the denomination's stance against homosexuality and "gay marriage," but Wright says he and the SBC are simply reflecting clear biblical teachings.

The school's awarding of the honorary degree to Wright during graduation was the lead story April 20 in the student newspaper, The Daily Gamecock, which quoted a member of the Bisexual Gay Lesbian Student Association as calling the SBC "hostile to the Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender community" and an "advocate for hate." Wright is scheduled to receive the degree May 7.

"Basically, the Southern Baptist's platform is 'it's either this way or you're going to hell,'" said the student, Zac Baker, a public relations coordinator for the association.

The newspaper also published letters opposing and supporting the school honoring Wright.

Wright, pastor of Johnson Ferry Baptist Church in Marietta, Ga., received his undergraduate degree from the university in 1974. He will not have a speaking role at the graduation.

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Mother of the Year

Lisa Byrd, First Baptist, Harrisburg member, is ABN Mother of the Year.

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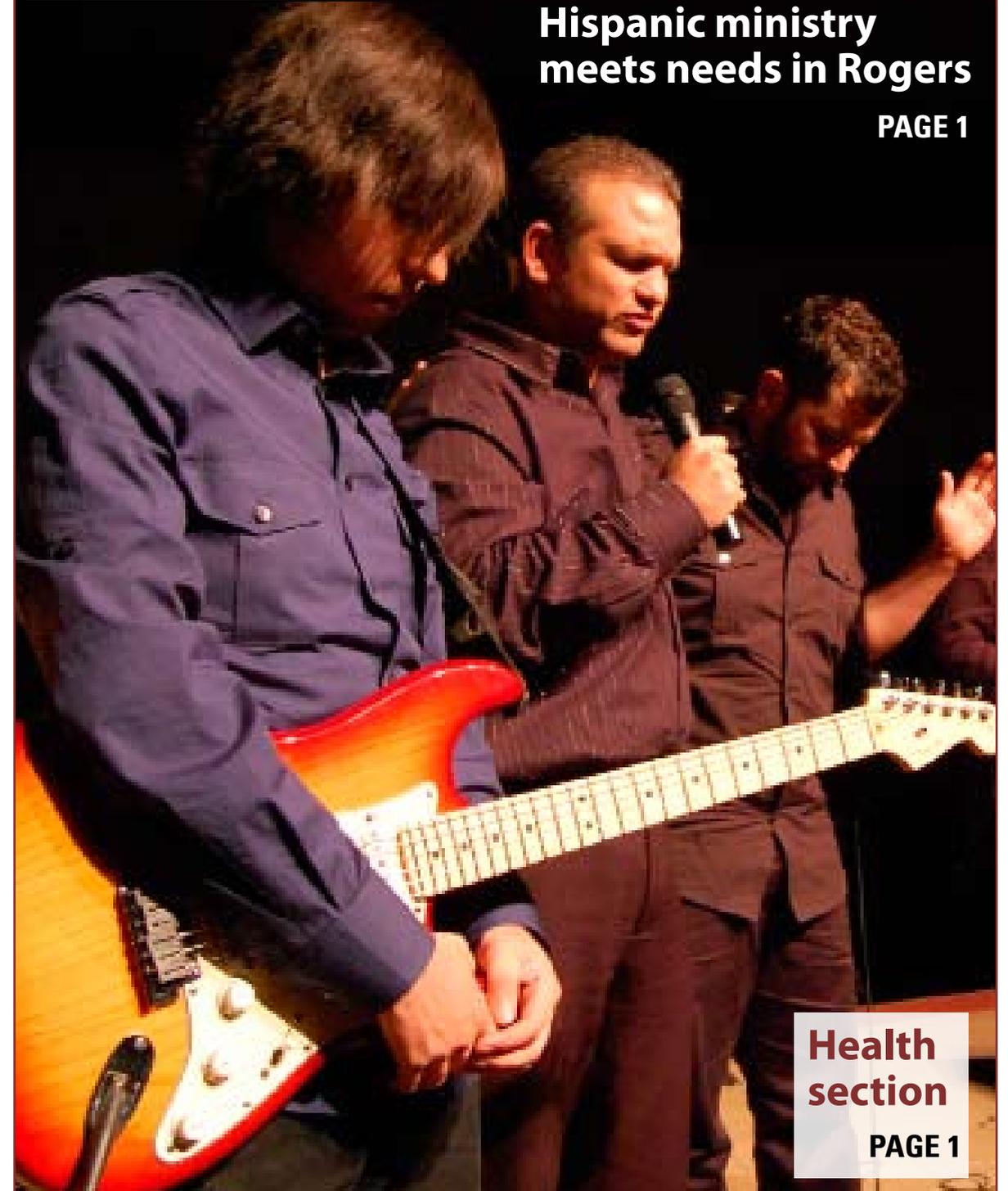
Disaster relief

Arkansas Baptist volunteers respond following storms.

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Hispanic ministry meets needs in Rogers

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Health section

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