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# Baptists affirm stances on sexual abuse, racism

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. - With the theme, "Gospel above all," Southern Baptists strengthened their stances against sexual abuse and racism during the opening and closing days of the June 11-12 Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Annual Meeting in Birmingham, Ala.

On the annual meeting's opening day, messengers cast their votes - raising booklets that contained their printed ballots - for amendments to the SBC constitution to specifically state that sexual abuse and discrimination based on ethnicity are grounds for a church to be deemed as "not in friendly cooperation" with the convention.

Messengers likewise voted to amend the SBC's bylaws to repurpose the SBC's Credentials Committee into a standing committee to make inquiries and recommendations for action regarding instances of sexual abuse, racism or other issues that call a church's relationship with the SBC into question.

The constitutional amendments will require a second two-thirds messenger vote at next year's annual meeting in Orlando, Fla. The repurposing of the Credentials Commission required only a two-thirds vote this year as an amendment to the convention's bylaws.

"May this world know that the Southern Baptist Convention stands against all forms of sexual abuse," said Ronnie Floyd, president and CEO of the SBC Executive Committee. "May this world know that this convention of churches - 47,000 churches, plus a few

thousand congregations, just under 52,000 churches and congregations - has given a clear signal not only about what we believe about sexual abuse, but we also stand against all ethnic discrimination in the United States and around the world."

Prior to the kickoff of the annual meeting, the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) hosted a panel discussion for a crowd of about 1,200 people on Monday, June 10, in which abuse survivors addressed how churches need to respect and assist survivors and report abuse allegations to authorities.

During the panel discussion, Bible teacher Beth Moore said, "What I want to say to my own family of Southern Baptists: Our family is sick. We need help. We have a very, very serious problem because we have this built-in disesteem for women, and it's got to change."

On the annual meeting's closing day, June 12, SBC President J.D. Greear, in an update on the Sexual Abuse Advisory Study that he and the ERLC initiated in 2018, said, "Victims have told us, words without follow-up actions are worse than no words at all." Victims, he said, "want to see ... that we care enough about this issue to do whatever it takes to make our churches safe for survivors and safe from abuse." He then offered an eight-step "Care Well" challenge to pastors for addressing sexual abuse in the church.

Messengers also adopted

See **SBC** page 6



A prayer of lament and reconciliation is offered for victims of sexual abuse in the church June 12 during the afternoon session of the Southern Baptist Convention Annual Meeting in Birmingham, Ala. Photo By Caleb Yarbrough

## Arkansas Baptists at SBC Birmingham

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. - Close to 250 Arkansas Baptists were among the 8,000-plus messengers attending the 2019 Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) in Birmingham, Ala. Many Arkansas Baptists make the annual meeting a part of their summer plans each year and encourage others to do the same.

The SBC Annual Meeting "helps us all be informed, helps us represent our state well," said Bobby Thomas, president of the Arkansas Baptist Foundation. "It's important that our local congregations send messengers and participate in the process of approving budgets, resolutions and all those things."



Brett Cooper (left), talks with Nathaniel Caswell of Cross Church School of Ministry at the Williams Baptist University booth in the exhibit hall of the Southern Baptist Convention Annual Meeting in Birmingham.

Doug Hibbard, pastor, East End Baptist Church, East End, agreed, saying, "It's important to be a part of our cooperative ministry. Decisions are made

by the people that are here so you need to be here so that you can help make the decisions and have a voice in the process."

Bob Snell, media and communications director, Central Baptist Church, Jonesboro, said that annual meeting attendees "get to hear from our national leaders about the future of what the Southern Baptist Convention is going to look like, helping us bring that back to our congregations so that we are all worshipping together, leading together and learning how to reach others together."

See page 8 for a photo gallery from the SBC Annual Meeting in Birmingham.



## ABN classifieds get results!

Read them on Page 10.

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## ABN Digest

Stories of interest  
to Arkansas Baptists

### Nominations accepted for Baptist Business Leader

LITTLE ROCK – Do you know a Southern Baptist businessman or businesswoman who is making a huge impact for Jesus Christ through his or her marketplace influence?

Nominations for the fourth annual *Arkansas Baptist News* (ABN) Arkansas Baptist Business Leader of the Year are now open, and it's up to ABN readers to nominate a businessman or businesswoman they feel is worthy of consideration.

"The ABN wants to bring attention to Arkansas Baptists who are making a difference for Christ in the lives of others and through their businesses and in the marketplace," said Tim Yarbrough, ABN editor/executive director.

Candidates should be a resident of Arkansas, a member of an Arkansas Baptist church and actively involved in ministry in his or her church and in other areas.

To nominate someone, please include the following: 1) name, phone number, email and church membership of the submitter; 2) name, phone number, email and church membership of the candidate, and 3) a 200-400 word essay explaining why the candidate should be considered for Arkansas Baptist Business Leader of the Year, including a short essay on the impact he or she makes in the business world, as well as his or her involvement in church/ministries/missions.

Submissions must be received on or before Nov. 1.

Email nominations to [tim@arkansasbaptist.org](mailto:tim@arkansasbaptist.org) or mail to Arkansas Baptist Business Leader of the Year, *Arkansas Baptist News*, 10 Remington Dr., Little Rock, AR 72204.

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

# Crossover reaches thousands in Birmingham prior to SBC meeting

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. – All across the city, teams of Southern Baptists knocked on doors as part of Crossover, an outreach event held annually in the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Annual Meeting host city. Volunteers gathered from across the state and nation to be involved; even some who couldn't stay for the SBC meeting traveled to Birmingham, Ala., to be a part of reaching the southern city with the gospel.

About 400 teams of Southern Baptists took to the streets to pray with families and share the gospel of Jesus Christ prior to the annual meeting.

Despite intermittent rain and threats of even worse weather on Saturday, June 8, Southern Baptists set out to knock on the doors of 20,000 homes in greater Birmingham in their annual Crossover outreach.

Teams fanned out in the neighborhoods around eight Alabama Baptist churches – First, Oak Grove; First Baptist Church, Mount Olive; The Baptist Church at McAdory, McCalla; The Church at Brook Hills, Birmingham; First Baptist Church, Pelham; First Baptist Church, Moody; Mount High Baptist Church, Warrior; and First Baptist Church, Trussville.

A ninth church – Sixth Ave-

nue Baptist, Birmingham, Ala. – served as the host site for a free medical and dental clinic for the community.

"We maxed out the dental and medical clinics," said Sammy Gilbreath, Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM) director of evangelism, noting that even though the site was supposed to close at 4 p.m., the dentists worked into the evening with people who had already registered.

People met Jesus there too – one while sitting in the dental chair, led to faith by the dentist. And while the adults had medical needs met, a team from First Baptist Church, Prattville, Ala., did Vacation Bible School (VBS) with the kids.

The teams started their morning with training by longtime evangelism trainer Bill Fay via video. The volunteers then divided into groups and went into the community, each with the goal of visiting around 50 homes throughout the day.

Southern Baptists prayed with the residents and distributed information on nearby Alabama Baptist churches, a New Testament and a gospel tract.

"All day long Crossover was an unbelievable, enthusiastic, passionate event," Gilbreath



Arkansas native Dylan Anderson, college minister at Englewood Baptist Church, Englewood, N.C., led a landscaping worker to Christ during Crossover Birmingham. Screenshot from a video posted *The Alabama Baptist*

said. "Thunderstorms didn't hurt the effort. There were contacts made, Bibles left, people who accepted Christ, and we're celebrating every single one."

Arkansas native Dylan Anderson, college minister at Englewood Baptist Church, Englewood, N.C., and student at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, said his Crossover experience was "phenomenal."

"We hit thousands of homes, saw dozens of people come to faith in Christ, and see them connected to a local body of believers for partnership," said Anderson, who was born and reared in Perry County. "Crossover is a perfect picture of what Southern Baptist cooperation should look like – hundreds of Baptists partnering together for the sake of the propagation of the gospel. What a great experience for this small-town Razorback!"

In a video posted by *The Alabama Baptist*, Anderson recounted leading a landscaping worker, Pubelo, to Christ.

"I was able to share with him, with my little bit of Spanish, and his little bit of English, the truth of God's Word that showed him that he was a sinner, that there was nothing that he could do about his sin, and that he needed reconciliation, that he needed to be restored to God through Jesus Christ. And he was able to pray and to receive Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior

today. I am thankful for that opportunity," Anderson said.

Rodney Parker, minister to students at The Baptist Church at McAdory, said it was "great to see youth involved in sharing the gospel with others" during the event.

Scooter Kellum, who serves in student ministry with the SBOM and at Eastern Hills Baptist Church, Montgomery, Ala., agreed. One of his students, Joseph Higbee, had asked to participate in Crossover for his 14th birthday, so his whole family had driven up for the day.

"His heart is just on fire for the Lord," Kellum said, noting since Higbee had given his life to Christ at a youth camp last summer, he had spent hours reading the Bible, organized his school's See You at the Pole event and a Bible study group and was constantly looking for other ways to share his faith.

"It's been amazing to watch," Kellum said.

In the week leading up to June 8, teams of college and seminary students did prayer walking, served in local churches' VBS and made door-to-door evangelistic visits.

Organizers tallying the day's numbers said volunteers knocked on the doors of 10,409 homes, had 1,817 gospel conversations, prayed with 2,251 people and saw 364 people place their faith in Jesus.

*This article was compiled from reporting by The Alabama Baptist, Arkansas Baptist News and Baptist Press.*



**GREENWICH SPEAKS AT ABCHOMES' 125th** – Ron Greenwich, an alumnus of the Arkansas Baptist Children's Homes and Family Ministries and retired Southern Baptist missionary to Brazil, speaks at the agency's 125th anniversary celebration held June 7 at First Baptist Church, Monticello. Photo by Tim Yarbrough

Group has three projects in Arkansas in 2019

## World Changers 'committed to true ministry'

Sarah Davis  
Arkansas Baptist News

LITTLE ROCK – More than 200 volunteers from Texas, Colorado, Iowa and other states gathered in Little Rock the week of June 10-14 with World Changers to complete 14 construction projects and to host five community sites.

“Since 1990, World Changers has been gathering Christians from all across the country to provide service and ministry to cities across America,” said Will McMahan, a World Changers representative. “Little Rock is just one of many cities that this occurs. We are very fortunate to have a city that supports World Changers the way it does.”

A ministry of LifeWay, World Changers is a week-long mission trip for high school and college students. The faith-based organization provides construction, church planting and urban projects all over the country for groups to participate in while teaching them to share the story of

Jesus with others.

“I like World Changers because I go to new places, meet new people and spread the Word of Jesus,” said Micah Ermert, a student from Piggott.

Ermert has served with World Changers for four summers and has served in Alabama, Ohio and Tennessee.

“This week shows that we are willing to give up our time and our summer to spread the Word of the gospel, and that means something to people,” she said.

Life Line Baptist Church in Little Rock has hosted World Changers' volunteers for 11 years. The church partners with 21 other churches in the area to feed the group.

With the help of Little Rock's housing and neighborhood programs, World Changers has completed 300 projects in the past 13 years of partnership.

“We just want to welcome our World Changers friends that are making a commitment to our city by helping to revitalize



Little Rock Mayor Frank Scott Jr. (center) poses with World Changers volunteers at Carl Hines' house. Photo by Sarah Davis

homes for those that are in need,” said Frank Scott Jr., mayor of Little Rock.

“We are very grateful for this partnership with a faith-based organization that is truly committed to true ministry – the ministry of people, the ministry of revitalization and the ministry of making certain that we are all working together,” said Scott.

Carl Hines, a 90-year-old veteran, has lived in the same Little Rock community since

the 1970s. His house is one of the World Changers construction sites this summer that will be painted.

“I'm so thankful and grateful,” said Hines. “You never know what the Lord has got in store for you. I appreciate everything.”

World Changers was in Pine Bluff the week of, June 17-22, and will return to minister in Fort Smith June 22-29.

Contact Sarah Davis at [sarah@arkansasbaptist.org](mailto:sarah@arkansasbaptist.org).

## Leaders comment on resolutions, issues facing SBC

Caleb Yarbrough  
Arkansas Baptist News

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. – Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) leaders answered questions on various topics – including sexual abuse – in a resolutions press conference following the SBC Annual Meeting June 12.

Robert Downen of the *Houston Chronicle* asked whether or not the SBC's resolution denouncing abortion (Resolution 1), as well as a resolution on sexual abuse (Resolution 2), were contradictory in cases where rape and/or incest leads to pregnancy.

“Our opposition to sexual abuse and our opposition to abortion are not in conflict; they are rooted in the very same concern for human dignity,” said Russell Moore, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission.

“We oppose sexual abuse and sexual assault because we believe that women and men are made in the image of God. And we oppose abortion because we believe that every



Roger S. “Sing” Oldham (left), Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Executive Committee's vice president for convention communications and relations; Curtis Woods (center), chairman of the SBC Resolutions Committee, and Russell Moore, president of the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the SBC participate in a resolutions press conference. Photo by Caleb Yarbrough

human being is created in the image of God and is deserving of protection and dignity,” said Moore.

Another topic addressed during the press conference was a resolution on critical race theory and intersectionality (Resolution 9).

Adelle Banks of Religion News Service solicited comment on Resolution 9, asking “why it created so much heat ... and ... whether you viewed the resolution as being a complete rejection of it or in some

way an acknowledgement and support of it?”

“The Bible is the rule and the guide to our faith and practice. But you also saw us saying that it (critical race theory and intersectionality) could be utilized as an analytical tool, not as a transcendent worldview,” said Curtis Woods, chairman of the SBC Resolutions Committee. “The debate came because individuals on both sides were concerned about the gospel of Jesus Christ.”

In a question regarding

whether or not the Resolutions Committee had resolutions they felt most strongly about, Woods responded, “Obviously we felt strongly about the issue on the evil of sexual abuse.

“The overarching theme ... would have been ... protection of the unborn as well as those that could find themselves vulnerable to sexual abuse as well as just keeping the gospel of Jesus Christ first,” said Woods.

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

### ABN Digest

Stories of interest  
to Arkansas Baptists

#### Baptist Prep students excel in academics, extracurriculars

LITTLE ROCK – The Baptist Preparatory School in Little Rock boasted a successful 2018-2019 school year through academics, athletics and service projects.

Baptist Prep, a ministry of First Baptist Church, Little Rock, had 54 graduates who averaged 26 on the ACT. The class averaged a 3.76 GPA and completed 567 concurrent course hours for college credit.

Austin Crook, the 2019 valedictorian, was a National Merit Finalist and Stephens Award winner. Isaac McBride, a senior basketball player, was named Wendy's Player of the Year, Channel 7 Full Court Player of the Year, Arkansas Coaches Association Player of the Year and All-Arkansas Prep Democrat-Gazette Player of the Year. McBride was also a Big-Baller All-Star participant in Las Vegas and on the Max Preps All-American team.

Bailey Grace Dunstan, a junior golfer, won the individual conference championship and overall state championship. She was selected All-Arkansas Prep Golfer of the Year.

The Baptist Prep boys' tennis team finished as state runner-up. Seth Hernandez, a tennis player, won the conference singles championship and 3A state championship and was state overall runner-up. The boys' golf team won the conference tournament and the 3A state tournament.

During missions week in March, Baptist Prep's upper school students served at 14 Arkansas sites as well as in Colorado Springs, South Dakota, New York City, Dominican Republic, Italy and Peru. About 300 students gave 8,300 hours in service and evangelism.

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# Editorial & Opinion

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

1 Peter 3:15 (NIV)

## When praying for the president is ridiculed

For periods during its existence, the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission struggled financially. Subsequently, the missions organization was always looking for ways to not only keep men and boys involved in missions, but also generate much needed revenue.

In the early 1990s during former President Bill Clinton's tenure as the 42nd president of the United States, leaders at the Brotherhood came up with the idea to

publish a small, inexpensive pamphlet titled simply, "Pray for the President."

It goes without saying that Clinton's time in office included a lot of drama and controversy. The pamphlet did not take a political stand, but it was simply a call for Christians to pray for their leader – for godly wisdom, for guidance and for strength.

"Pray for the President" hit a nerve with Southern Baptists, and they responded. The little pamphlet sold like hotcakes. Churches bought and distributed copies to all their members. What's more, the Brotherhood's vice president of financial services announced at the annual staff Christmas party that "Pray for the President" nearly single-handedly kept the entity in the black that year.

The former layman's organization is now long gone – having been absorbed into what became the North American Mission Board – but to this day I recall the phenomenal way God used something as simple as "Pray for the President" to lead His

people to pray during an important time in our nation's history.

Recently, Franklin Graham, president of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, issued a call for a "special day of prayer" on June 2 for President Donald Trump, citing the biblical charge to pray for leaders from 1 Timothy 2:1-4 (ESV):

"First of all, then, I urge

that supplications, prayers, intercessions and thanksgivings be made for all people,

for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."

In warning that America is on the brink of disaster, Graham said on Facebook that he feels Trump is the most persecuted president in the nation's history.

"We believe our nation is at a crossroads, at a dangerous precipice. The only one who can fix our country's problems is God Himself, and we pray that God will bless our president and our nation for His glory," Graham said.

"President Trump's enemies continue to try everything to destroy him, his family and the presidency," Graham said. "In the history of our country, no president has been attacked as he has. I believe the only hope for him, and this nation, is God."

While calling for prayer for a controversial president like

Clinton or Trump is sometimes met with ridicule, Scripture is clear regarding the appropriate Christian response – pray often and not only on special occasions.

The opportunity to pray for the president came recently for David Platt, former International Mission Board president, who is now pastor of McLean Bible Church in Virginia.

While Platt was criticized by some pundits – even by some members of his church – for praying for Trump during one of his church services, he was clearly aware of his responsibility.

"Sometimes we find ourselves in situations that we didn't see coming, and we're

faced with a decision in a moment when we don't have the liberty of deliberation, so we do our best to glorify God," Platt explained in a statement following his prayer. "Today, I found myself in one of those situations."

He continued, "My aim was in no way to endorse the president, his policies, or his party, but to obey God's command to pray for our president and other leaders to govern in the way this passage portrays."

Platt prayed with his Bible held high in one hand, with his other hand resting on the president's back. He said in part:

"Oh God, we praise You as the one universal King over

all. You are our leader and our Lord, and we worship You. There is one God and one Savior, and it's You. Your name is Jesus, and we exalt you, Jesus.

"And we know, we need Your mercy. We need Your grace; we need Your help; we need Your wisdom in our country. And so we stand right now, on behalf of our president, and we pray for Your grace, and Your mercy, and Your wisdom upon him.

"God, we pray for Your blessing, in that way, upon his family. We pray that You would give them strength; we pray that You give them clarity, wisdom.

See **PRESSING ON** page 7



### Pressing On

Tim Yarbrough

Phil. 3:14

Cartoon by Gary Thomas



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## The historical Jesus - Part 5

Since the beginning of Christianity, believers have claimed Jesus physically, bodily rose from the dead. That being the case, one would expect to have some post-death appearances. As it happens, such appearances have been recorded. Paul claimed that more than 500 people saw the resurrected Christ (1 Cor. 15:6). Additionally, all of the 12, excluding Judas, saw Jesus' resurrected body. According to Scripture, Jesus ascended into heaven 40 days after



### Deep Waters

Chad Meeks

His resurrection. So he had plenty of time to reveal Himself to folks.

Most ancient Near Eastern scholars agree that Jesus appeared to His disciples after His death. That's not to say that all scholars claim these appearances happened because Jesus physically rose from the dead by the power of God.

The two most popular non-Christian explanations of the postmortem appearances are the hallucination theory and a look-alike theory. Let's start with the hallucination. It isn't unheard of for someone to think he saw something when that object wasn't really there. All sorts of things can cause hallucinations: drugs, brain dysfunctions, eye issues or a freak happenstance of nature. It isn't common, however, for mass hallucinations to take place. In fact, it would almost be a miracle, in and of itself, for 500 people to hallucinate the postmortem appearance of Jesus. Things like a single, coherent mass hallucination just don't happen.

As for the look-alike theory, it really doesn't have much strength either. The disciples spent three years with Jesus. It seems a bit odd that – after spending such time with Him – Jesus' closest companions couldn't tell if someone was impersonating Him. But let's hypothetically say someone could have looked very similar to Jesus. Did this person also put nail holes in his wrists and feet? And a spear wound in his side? That just doesn't seem like the best explanation.

Probably the most pressing objections to the bodily resurrection are the claims that the resurrection is mythical or merely spiritual. That is, according to this idea, Jesus didn't bodily rise from the dead. His resurrection was just an inspirational story or merely spiritual.

The most significant problem with this view is that early Christians believed in a bodily resurrection. Granted, one can find variant views of the resurrection all the way back to the New Testament (for example, Gnosticism), but such views were never widely accepted and definitely were not what the apostles and original disciples believed.

If one claims that the resurrection is merely spiritual, I ask: Upon what authority can such a claim be made? Scripture? Clearly, Scripture and its writers held to a physical resurrection. Reason? One would have to perform some pretty incredible intellectual gymnastics to defend such a claim with reason. I'm not even sure how one would begin. The disciples saw and touched Jesus' resurrected body. How does one touch a spirit?

Given the lack of any other good (or reasonable) explanation, the evidence seems to best be explained by claiming that the early disciples literally saw Jesus' resurrected body because Jesus physically rose from the grave.

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

## Update on Arkansas River DR efforts

Arkansas has been impacted by flooding of record proportions along the Arkansas River. Estimations are that thousands of homes will be affected. We are anticipating a long-term relief effort lasting several months. This disaster is somewhat unique in that it affects a large portion of our state, and so our response will have to be unique.



### Executive Directions

Sonny Tucker

At this time, we have three critical needs. First, we need to mobilize a massive number of volunteers across the state to get involved with our relief effort. We need many volunteers from Arkansas churches to help clear the mud out of the staggering number of flooded homes. As it stands now, our plan is to set up relief sites in at least five locations with our trained disaster relief (DR) teams on site to hand out equipment, give instructions, show a brief training video and coordinate the work. Relief work has begun

in western Arkansas; however, it could be weeks before other areas are accessible. Please schedule your volunteer work over several months.

Second, we need you to give. Your partnership in Cooperative Program missions and the Dixie Jackson State Missions Offering supports

DR units across the state who stand ready for deployment on a moment's notice to a natural disaster.

In major disasters, additional money is needed to cover the tremendous cost of deployments such as this. To financially support Arkansas DR efforts, you have to donate directly through our website, [abscdisasterrelief.org](http://abscdisasterrelief.org). DR units are not receiving additional donations of water, food, clothes or other material items.

Third, we need you to pray! People are hurting and need hope in this serious crisis. Also, this is an opportunity to share Jesus – in recent deploy-

ments to Nebraska flooding, Arkansas Baptist DR volunteers led 55 people to Christ. Please pray!

During this response, our DR website, [abscdisasterrelief.org](http://abscdisasterrelief.org), will serve as a hub for updates, future training opportunities, prayer requests and ways to give and go. Arkansas Baptists are already responding to this crisis by praying, giving and serving. Hundreds of volunteers have attended recent trainings at Grand Avenue Baptist Church in Fort Smith, Central Baptist Church in Conway and First Baptist Church in White Hall. Please watch for additional trainings.

Arkansas Baptists have enough manpower and fantastic people in our churches to clean out the flooded homes, love on people, put joy on kids' faces and bring help, healing and hope to Arkansans. Thank you Arkansas Baptists for how you always respond!

J.D. "Sonny" Tucker is executive director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention.

## Watching the kingdom advance

May and June are always fun months with the Arkansas Baptist State Convention. If you enjoy hearing how the gospel and the kingdom are advancing in our state and beyond, they are definitely the months for you.

Between my service with the Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC) Executive Board and

now consecutive terms as convention president, I've been blessed with a long run

of attendance at the key meetings where our ABSC team rolls out its year-end reports and casts vision for the next year's ministry.

I called those meetings "fun" in the first sentence of this column, but there are better adjectives: exciting, encouraging, even exhilarating (we all speak pastoral alliteration, don't we?). Even when I drag myself down to Little Rock a little beat up or worn out, those reports and planning sessions inspire me in some substantial ways.

They remind me that cooperation works. That the Cooperative Program works. That I'm not alone. That God is still moving. That the gospel is still good news. Even that the sky really isn't falling ... in fact, in some ways, things are better than ever.

And, of course, it's the people that matter the most



### President's Perspective

Greg Sykes

to me. Whether you've realized it or not, we've seen some significant transitions over the past few years

among the leadership of some of our state agencies and institutions – and I deeply believe in this current wave of leaders. They all replaced tremendous leaders and godly folks ... but the drive forward continues.

If you haven't gotten to know Bobby Thomas of the Arkansas Baptist Foundation, you need to; there is no more innovative, kingdom-minded, gracious leader in our state. But I feel the same way about Derek Brown as he succeeds David Perry as executive direc-

tor with the Arkansas Baptist Children's Homes.

And, of course, our state has been blessed with the leadership of Ben Sells at Ouachita Baptist University and Stan Norman at Williams Baptist University. Both institutions are in great hands. The same can be said of the *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine* and its steady, faithful leader, Tim Yarbrough.

And I can't leave out Camp Siloam. Executive director Jason Wilkie has been steadily transforming the camp in just a few years, including completing the long overdue construction of a new dining hall.

Not to mention our convention itself, as Sonny Tucker continues to lead the way. And, if you don't feel the same confidence, you just need to join me in Little Rock each May or June for a few critical reports and planning sessions, and you'll feel the same. God is good, and He is still on the move in Arkansas.

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

## Letters to the Editor welcomed

The *Arkansas Baptist News (ABN)* welcomes Letters to the Editor regarding issues of concern to Southern Baptists in Arkansas.



Send Letters to the Editor to [tim@arkansasbaptist.org](mailto:tim@arkansasbaptist.org) or to our mailing address. Letters must be typed, double-spaced and 300 words or less (fewer words, the

better). Letters must be signed and marked "for publication" and may be edited to fit space requirements.

# Arkansas DR teams aid those affected by recent flooding

AS RECENT floods subside across the state, many Arkansans have been left with physical and emotional damage wrought by rampant waters.

In response to flooding, Arkansas Baptist disaster relief (DR) volunteers began deploying to Fort Smith June 3.

Trained and untrained “spontaneous” DR volunteers have been assisting Fort Smith residents in removing furniture and other valuables from homes and have performed “tear out” procedures to damaged parts of residences, sprayed 13 homes with the mold treatment ShockWave, completed 310 loads of laundry, provided 435 showers, assessed 45 homes, spoken

with 304 individuals affected by recent storms and flooding, made nine gospel presentations and seen four people saved as of press time, according to [absdisasterrelief.org](http://absdisasterrelief.org).

While deployments to Fort Smith will continue, according to the Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC), volunteers are needed in other areas of the state as well.

A distribution center is currently active in Fort Smith, providing ShockWave treatment and flood recovery assistance, said the ABSC. Operations began in Pine Bluff June 12 but are limited to ShockWave distribution. Distribution centers began operations in North Little Rock and Conway June 14-16.

If you are, or know, a home-



An Arkansas DR volunteer removes debris from a home affected by recent flooding. *ABSC photo*

owner affected by recent flooding, assistance can be requested at [absdisasterrelief.org/gethelp](http://absdisasterrelief.org/gethelp).

## Riley retires, ‘redirecting’ to Tennessee

LITTLE ROCK - Lynn Riley, a church health team member for the Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC), will officially retire June 30. Riley



Riley

provided resources, networks and encouragement to bi-vocational pastors and smaller membership churches. “I tell folks I’m not retiring, I’m redirecting,” said Riley. “I’m still going to be in ministry, but only part-time.”

Riley and his wife will be moving to Tennessee to be closer to their children and grandchildren.

“I’ve made connections with some friends in Tennes-

see that have plugged things in, and I already have some of-fers,” said Riley.

Riley started working at the ABSC in August 1998. During his 21 years of ministry, he has visited 800 Arkansas Baptist churches, built numerous relationships with pastors and key leaders and strategized building usage for smaller churches.

“God has used Lynn to impact Arkansas Baptist churches in mighty ways. Lynn loves Christ and the Body of Christ,” said Greg Addison, associate executive director for the ABSC.

“He was a friend to countless pastors across Arkansas and a servant of the church in every way. He is also a friend with whom I have been blessed to serve and am grateful for that privilege.”

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## SBC

*continued from page one*

a resolution on “the evil of sexual abuse,” which read, in part, “We affirm that sexual abuse is not only a sin to be disciplined in the context of the church but also a crime to be prosecuted in the context of civil government.”

On June 11, even as messengers inside the convention hall wrestled with the issue of sexual abuse, protestors, demanding a system to make it harder for clergy predators to move from church to church, gathered on the sidewalk outside of the convention hall for the second annual For Such a Time as This rally. “We have seen some progress, but there is a lot more work to be done,” said rally organizer Cheryl Summers.

“We will continue to speak for those who imagine they are the only ones living a private nightmare,” she said. “We will continue to speak because well-meaning pastors just don’t know what they don’t know, and they do tremendous damage to survivors,” she said.

The unofficial messenger registration total was 8,183, including 239 messengers from Arkansas Baptist churches. The official messenger count at the 2018 SBC Annual Meeting in Dallas was 9,637.

Messengers reelected Greear to a second term as SBC president. He will lead a diverse slate of officers, including: Marshal Ausberry, senior pastor of Antioch Baptist Church in Fairfax, Va., first vice president; Noe Garcia, senior pastor of North Phoenix Baptist Church, second vice president; John Yeats, executive director of Missouri Baptist Convention, recording secretary; and Karhy Litton, director of planter spouse development for the North American Mission Board (NAMB), registration secretary. Litton is the first woman to serve as SBC registration secretary, edging out incumbent SBC registration secretary Don Currence by 44 votes.

### IMB and NAMB

At a Tuesday afternoon commissioning, the International Mission Board (IMB) commissioned 26 new Southern Baptist international missionaries.

“Look around this room,” Paul Chitwood, IMB president, told the Southern Baptist messengers in attendance. “You are a part of sending people, families, who have committed their lives to take the name of Jesus to the nations and proclaim that there is salvation in no other name. Missionaries, look around the room. You are surrounded by

churches who love you. They covenant together at this moment to pray for you.

“IMB missionaries, we not only pray for you now, we commit to praying for you and to support you as God takes you to the nations. Together, we now – as your Southern Baptist family – send you to the nations.”

In a NAMB presentation at the annual meeting, the focus was on Southern Baptists’ “Who’s Your One” emphasis, which encourages each Southern Baptist to pray for and share an evangelistic witness with one person in the next year. If 10 percent of church attenders in the Southern Baptist Convention decided to pray for and see one person come to Christ over the next year, Southern Baptists would record the highest number of baptisms in the history of the SBC, said Johnny Hunt, NAMB’s senior vice president of evangelism and leadership. NAMB President Kevin Ezell reported the distribution of more than 20,000 Who’s Your One evangelism church kits, 155,000 prayer guides and 1.4 million bookmarks.

### Other news

– Greear, in his presidential address, said that Southern Baptists are at a crossroads, not regarding their doctrine or mission, but regarding “what

kind of gospel witnesses we will be in an age like ours.” He gave three defining values he believes should shape the future of the SBC: 1) Prioritize the gospel above all, 2) Be willing to do whatever it takes to reach all people and 3) Commit to sending every member.

– The Woman’s Missionary Union (WMU) celebrated its 131st anniversary with 131 mission and learning activities at its headquarters in Birmingham, Ala., June 10. More than 750 people participated in the celebration. “Women for years across the states have invested in this place,” she said. “We wanted in a fun way to welcome them home (WMU headquarters). In May we had our 131st anniversary.... We decided it might be fun to have 131 activities on the campus, ... and to think of 131 things... It’s not the place, it’s what the place represents – our connection to share the gospel around the world ... and to tread where the giants have tread,” said Sandy Wisdom-Martin, WMU executive director-treasurer.

– In addition to agency reports, the annual meeting featured several panel discussions, including: Undivided: Your Church and Racial Reconciliation, Gospel Above All: Keeping Secondary Issues Secondary, and Indispensable

Partners: The Value of Women in God’s Mission.

– A total of 23 motions were presented by messengers, and 13 resolutions were approved by messengers (see related story on page 7). To read all of the resolutions in their entirety, visit [arkansasbaptist.org/2019sbcresolutions](http://arkansasbaptist.org/2019sbcresolutions).

– In presenting the GuideStone Financial Resources report to messengers, GuideStone President and CEO O.S. Hawkins said that GuideStone’s Renee A. Trewick is the first African-American female chairperson of any SBC entity.

– Diversity on the SBC’s boards and committees continues to expand. Of the Committee on Nominations’ approximately 150 nominees elected to committees and boards, 32 percent are female or non-Caucasian. For the first time, IMB trustees were elected from eight conventions – Alaska, Hawaii, Montana, Iowa, Wyoming, Minnesota-Wisconsin, Utah-Idaho and the Dakotas – under newly expanded representation from smaller-membership areas. The Committee on Nominations for 2020, it was reported, will be 62 percent female or non-Caucasian.

*Story compiled from reporting by the Arkansas Baptist News, Baptist Press, Baptist News Global and Religion News Service.*

# SBC resolutions address sex abuse, religious persecution

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. – Messengers to the 2019 Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) approved 13 resolutions June 12, including those advocating for the vulnerable against abortion, sexual abuse and religious persecution.

The resolutions also addressed a variety of other issues including local church autonomy, same-sex attraction, justice, women in the military draft and gene editing.

On abortion, the messengers applauded the recent enactment of state laws to restrict or prohibit abortion and called for the U.S. Supreme Court to reverse the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision that legalized the lethal procedure.

In a meeting that made the sexual abuse crisis in the SBC a priority, messengers passed a resolution that condemned and lamented all such abuse and called on churches and institutions to establish a safe culture for survivors and to guard against and confront abuse.

Messengers also approved a measure in which they pledged to pray for the end of persecution in China and North Korea and called on the United States and the international community to make religious freedom a “top priority.”

All the resolutions except one passed in unanimous or near-unanimous votes. A resolution on critical race the-

ory and intersectionality still gained passage with a strong majority.

The resolution affirmed the Bible as “the first, last, and sufficient authority” regarding how the church tries to amend social evils and said critical race theory and intersectionality should only be used in submission to Scripture. The resolution described critical race theory as a set of tools to explain how race functions in society and intersectionality as the study of how various characteristics overlap.

Messengers also approved resolutions:

- To reaffirm the doctrine of local church autonomy under Christ’s lordship and rejected its use as a way to conceal the sins of pastors and

others in the church who are guilty of abuse.

- Urging Christians who battle same-sex attraction “to forsake any self-conception or personal identity that is contrary to God’s good and holy purposes in creation and redemption” and commended the “faithful witness” of such disciples who walk in obedience to Jesus.

- To oppose “a divisive spirit” and to develop a “cooperative culture” for the fulfillment of the Great Commission.

- To respond to injustices by gospel proclamation, advocacy for oppressed people, acting with justice personally and demanding that “spheres of society” function righteously, truthfully and lovingly.

- To renew a commitment

to the Great Commission and encouraged the convention’s seminaries, entities and churches to enable pastors to understand “how culture and contexts shape ministry methods and strategies.”

- Calling for the U.S. president and Congress to refuse to extend the military draft to include women.

- Denouncing human germline editing and calling on Congress and international policy makers to make it un-fundable and illegal.

- Confirming a commitment to Christ over a political party and acknowledging the various political affiliations and viewpoints in the convention’s churches.

- Expressing gratitude to God, as well as Southern Baptists in the Birmingham area and all others who helped with the 2019 annual meeting.

The committee chose not to act on proposals submitted on the following items: the moral character of government officials, reconciliation with Jewish people because of a lack of concern by the SBC during the Holocaust period, peace between the United States and Iran, and the freedom of conscience of whistleblowers in the SBC.

## PRESSING ON

*continued from page 4*

“We pray for Your blessings on our president toward that end. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.”

We are living in broken times. Our country needs prayer. Our president needs prayer. If we are to be healed, we must seek the One Who has the power to heal all

things. By doing so, we bring glory to God our Father:

“If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land” (2 Chron. 7:14, ESV).

*Tim Yarbrough is the editor/executive director of the Arkansas Baptist News. Email him at [tim@arkansasbaptist.org](mailto:tim@arkansasbaptist.org).*



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# Scenes from the SBC Annual Meeting in Birmingham

Photos by ABN staff



Complementarianism in the Southern Baptist church is discussed by the panel, *Indispensable Partners: The Value of Women in God's Mission*, during the afternoon session of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Annual Meeting June 12 in Birmingham, Ala. J.D. Greear, president of the SBC and senior pastor of The Summit Church in Raleigh, N.C., moderated the panel discussion. Panelists included (from left): Jen Wilkin, member of The Village Church in the Dallas, Texas; Donna Gaines, member of Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, Tenn.; Daniel Akin, president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C.; Malcom Yarnell, research professor of systematic theology at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas; and Trillia Newbell, director of community outreach at the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the SBC.



David Miller, a member of Tumbling Shoals Baptist Church near Heber Springs, and president and founder of Line Upon Line Ministries, presented a message on "Mature Manhood in the Pulpit" during the Mature Manhood in an Immature Age event hosted by Founders Ministries June 10 in Birmingham, Ala. Photo by Caleb Yarbrough



Cory Majors, senior pastor of West Baptist Church, Batesville, proudly wears an Arkansas Razorbacks shirt during the general session of the SBC Annual Meeting held June 11-12 in Birmingham, Ala. Photo by Caleb Yarbrough



Arkansas Baptist News (ABN) board member Steve Ellison and his wife, Malea. Steve Ellison is pastor of Salem Baptist Church, Salem. Photo by Tim Yarbrough



Lee Larry (bottom right), associate minister of connections and special projects at Cross Church in northwest Arkansas, holds up his ballot to vote on a resolution. Photo by Caleb Yarbrough

# Gospel Games

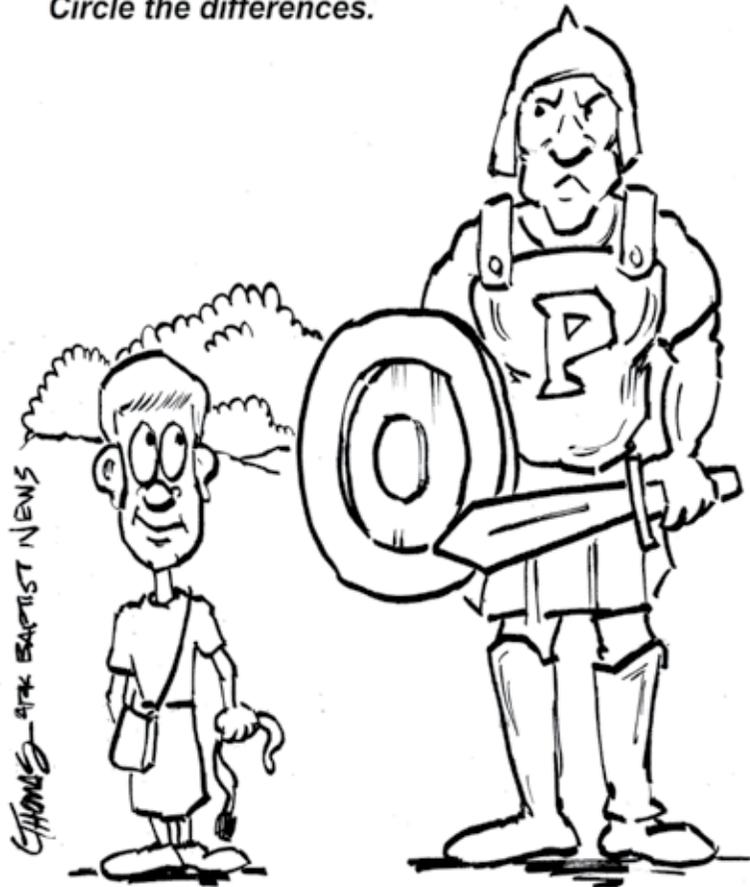
*"An athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules."*

2 Timothy 2:5 (CSB)

## David AND Goliath

Circle the differences.

*"This day the Lord will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you and take your head from you..." 1 Samuel 17:46*



**Across**

- 1. Word for Scrooge
- 4. Toothed wheel
- 8. "Ye shall not \_\_\_ of it" (Genesis 3:3)
- 11. Son of Hur, father of Bezaleel (Exodus 38)
- 12. "the scapegoat, shall be presented \_\_\_ before the Lord." (Leviticus 16:10)
- 13. Ginger \_\_\_
- 14. Grandson of Lois, son of Eunice (abbr.)
- 15. Belonging to (suffix)
- 16. Israeli leader
- 18. "a measure of fine flour be \_\_\_ for a shekel" (2 Kings 7:1)
- 20. "planted in a good \_\_\_ by great waters" (Ezekiel 17:8)
- 21. \_\_\_ culpa
- 22. "Who hath...given us the \_\_\_ of

- the Spirit" (2 Corinthians 1:22)
- 25. Ego
- 26. Dress style
- 27. Pronoun
- 28. Something Sandy says
- 29. Bridle part
- 30. Brother of Japheth (Genesis 6)
- 31. Editor's (abbr.)
- 32. Bathsheba's husband
- 34. "In \_\_\_ was there a voice heard" (Matthew 2:18)
- 35. "on my \_\_\_ is the shadow of death" (Job 16:16)
- 37. Shoshonean
- 38. Demolish (Brit.)
- 39. Sup
- 41. "that no man should \_\_\_ us in this abundance" (2 Corinthians 8:20)
- 43. Author Harper
- 44. 'The beams...are cedar, and our

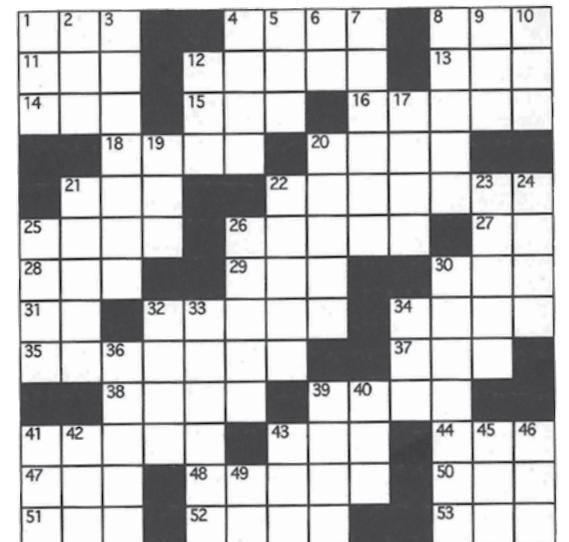
- rafters are \_\_\_"
- (Song of Solomon 1:17)
- 47. Like dialing 911
- 48. Turn over
- 50. Indian shell currency
- 51. "Stand in \_\_\_ and sin not" (Psalm 4:4)
- 52. "To him that is afflicted \_\_\_ should be showed" (Job 6:14)
- 53. "For God hath heard the voice of the \_\_\_ where he is" (Genesis 21:17)

**Down**

- 1. Erupt
- 2. Uris protagonist
- 3. "A man that hath friends must show \_\_\_ friendly" (Proverbs 18:24)
- 4. "Let us be \_\_\_ and rejoice" (Revelation 19:7)

- 5. Chemical suffix
- 6. Certain school equipment (abbr.)
- 7. One who's been saved by Jesus Christ
- 8. "As an \_\_\_ stirreth up her nest" (Deuteronomy 32:11)
- 9. Famed pugilist
- 10. "And Joseph's \_\_\_ brethren went down to...Egypt" (Genesis 42:3)
- 12. Feel much less than 100 percent
- 17. One (Ger.)
- 19. Clumsy one
- 20. Spoke (KJV)
- 21. "for his \_\_\_ endureth forever" (Psalm 136:1)
- 22. "Others said, That it is \_\_\_" (Mark 6:15)
- 23. "they were counted worthy to suffer \_\_\_ for his name" (Acts 5:41)

## ABN Crossword puzzle



**Crossword answer, page 10**

- 36. Expunge
- 39. "Lest I be full and \_\_\_ thee" (Proverbs 30:9)
- 40. Past tense (suffix)
- 41. Org. for young men
- 42. American founder of Girl Scouts
- 43. Tennis call
- 45. Longshoreman's org.
- 46. "Thy \_\_\_ and thy staff" (Psalm 23:4)
- 49. Greek letter

Crossword by Barbour Publishing, Inc.



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- 24. "inhabitants of the land of \_\_\_ brought water to him" (Isaiah 21:14)
- 25. White \_\_\_
- 26. "let every man... \_\_\_ with God" (1 Corinthians 7:24)
- 30. "a cage of every unclean and \_\_\_ bird" (Revelation 18:2)
- 32. A son of Peresh (1 Chronicles 7)
- 33. " \_\_\_ and get you from among my people" (Exodus 12:31)
- 34. "For the eyes of the Lord \_\_\_ to and fro" (2 Chronicles 16:9)



**CHURCH CELEBRATES 100 YEARS** — Shady Grove Baptist Church, Sparkman, celebrated its 100th anniversary homecoming on Sunday, June 2. Former pastors (from left) James Guthrie, Rick Hyde and J.D. "Sonny" Tucker, executive director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, were in attendance.

*Editor's Note: The Arkansas Baptist News would love to share your church news with the state. Send your information to sarah@arkansasbaptist.org or call 1-800-838-2272, ext. 5153. Please submit information three weeks prior to the event.*

### Church life

**Mount Olive Baptist Church, Crossett,** will host a free family movie night with popcorn at 8 p.m., Friday, June 21.

**Bethel Baptist Church, Jacksonville,** will host Blackwood Quartet in a free concert at 7 p.m., Saturday, July 6.

**Indian Springs Baptist Church, Bryant,** will host a block party 10 a.m.-1 p.m., Saturday, July 13, at Mills Park.

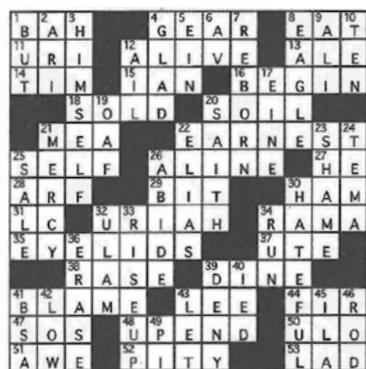
### On the move

**Colby Gunselman** is serving as youth pastor at First Baptist Church, Hot Springs.

**Chad Hughes** is serving as connections pastor at Beech Street First Baptist Church, Texarkana.

**Mark Parsley** is serving as student pastor at Mount Carmel Baptist Church, Cabot.

### See crossword, page 9



**Glen Pool** is serving as worship leader at Cocklebur Baptist Church, Ward.

**Bob Shelton** is serving as pastor at Mountain Top Cowboy Church, Heber Springs.

**Daniel Smith** is serving as student pastor at Beech Street First Baptist Church, Texarkana.

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**Weston Wills** is serving as minister of music and students at First Baptist Church, Hampton.

### Ordinations

**Michael Davidson**, youth minister at First Baptist Church in Newport, was ordained Sunday, June 2.

### Milestones

**Richard Posey**, associate pastor at Beech Street First Baptist Church in Texarkana, announced Sunday, June 2, that he will retire at the end of 2019.

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First Baptist Church of Gillham is seeking a **pastor**. Please send resume to First Baptist Church of Gillham, P.O. Box 150, Gillham, AR 71841.

Fellowship Baptist Church is seeking a **full-time pastor**. Please send resume to Fellowship Baptist Church, 124 Fellowship Cir., Converse, LA 71419 or e-mail: fbcpsc19@gmail.com.

Faith Baptist Church, Quitman, is seeking a **bi-vocational pastor**. Send resumes to Michael Rickel, PO Box 163, Quitman, AR 72131.

FBC, Stuttgart, is seeking candidates for a **full-time senior pastor**. Interested parties should send a resume to resumes@fbcstuttgart.com.

FBC, Ash Flat, seeking **bi-vocational pastor** for a small congregation. Contact Carl Fuller, 870-994-2139 or mail resume to FBC, PO Box 335, Ash Flat, AR 72513.

Witt's Chapel Baptist Church, Maynard, AR, is seeking a **bi-vocational or full-time pastor**. Send resumes and references to: David Byers, 1340 Legate Road, Maynard, AR 72444.

### OTHER STAFF POSITIONS

FBC, Ozark, MO, is accepting resumes for a **full-time student pastor**. For more details, visit [fbczark.org/student-pastor-opening](http://fbczark.org/student-pastor-opening). Please send resumes to fbcstudentpastor@gmail.com through July 15, 2019.

Forest Park Baptist Church, Joplin MO, is a multi-site church looking for a **student pastor** to lead the student ministry on our largest

campus, as well as serve as central team leader for the student ministers on our other two campuses. Our student ministry provides relevant outreach and discipleship opportunities through Unite (student worship), student LifeGroups, and student Awana. Our goal is to lead students to faith and equip them for a life of successful discipleship. Email cover letter and resume to hr@forestpark.church.

Cane Creek Stoddard Baptist Association is seeking an individual to serve as the **BSU director** at Three Rivers College in Poplar Bluff, MO. Details can be found at [www.ccsba.com](http://www.ccsba.com). Please email your cover letter and resume to ccsbaoffice@gmail.com.

Covenant Baptist Church, Collierville, TN, a conservative Southern Baptist Church with a traditional worship style, seeks a **full-time minister of students, singles, and**

**their families**. Applicants must send a cover letter and resume to youthsearch@mybcc.org or to Covenant Baptist Church, ATTN: Personnel Committee, P.O. Box 1165, Collierville, TN 38027-1165.

Trinity Baptist Church, Benton, AR, is seeking a **bi-vocational worship leader**. Send resume to trinitybenton@gmail.com or mail to 702 Church St., Benton, AR 72015.

FBC, Horatio, is seeking a **part-time youth and children's minister**. Send resumes to FBC, PO Box 296, Horatio, AR 71842.

First Baptist Church, Crossett, is actively seeking a **full-time youth minister**. Send resumes to resumes@fbcrosssett.com or mail to 701 Main St, Crossett, AR 71635.

First Baptist Church, Perryville, is seeking a **bi-vocational music director**. Send resumes to pvfb.church@gmail.com.

### MISCELLANEOUS

The *Arkansas Baptist News* is seeking applications for an **experienced advertising representative** to call on existing clients, as well as pursue new clients. A candidate for this position must have a proven track record in advertising sales. To apply, please email a detailed resume summarizing experience and qualifications no later than June 24 to [tim@arkansasbaptist.org](mailto:tim@arkansasbaptist.org). No phone calls please.

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JUNE 23, 2019

When I was in junior high, we went to a national forest for the last-day-of-school picnic. I was taking a trail to another part of the park to meet some friends. Somehow I got off the marked trail and got lost. No matter what I did, I kept going in circles.

Scientists tell us that without visual landmarks we tend to wander off course. More often than not, we tend to walk in circles. It is the same in the Christian walk. We must focus on important spiritual landmarks, or we will wander off course.

Paul was writing to Timothy because he wanted him to stay on course and succeed as “a good servant of Christ Jesus” (1 Tim. 4:6). Paul gave Timothy, and us, some landmarks to focus on so he could stay the course.

We must detect error in the Church (1 Tim. 4:1). In these “latter times,” the time between Jesus’ ascension and His Second Coming, there will be those who bring false teaching into the Church. Make no mistake – false teaching is demonic teaching (1 Tim. 4:1).

False teachers forbade marriage and demanded abstinence from certain foods, both of which God created (1 Tim. 4:3-4). They denied the goodness of God and distorted His Word. This tactic of the devil can be traced back to the Garden of Eden.

We also must declare truth to those in the Church (1 Tim. 4:6). Declaring truth is the way to combat false teaching. Paul gave three specifics about

### EXPLORE THE BIBLE

#### Staying on course

1 TIMOTHY 4:1-13 (HCSB)

declaring truth. First, teach with authority (1 Tim. 4:11, 13). Second, “be an example” of living in purity (1 Tim. 4:12). The Christ-follower

will always strive to be an example in “speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity” (1 Tim. 4:13). Last, we must “train” ourselves “in godliness” (1 Tim. 4:7). It is both beneficial for the present life and for eternity (1 Tim. 4:8).

We must be conscientious about our teaching and our practice (1 Tim. 4:16). Why? Because people are listening, watching and following us. What we say and do has eternal consequences (1 Tim. 4:16). Stay the course!

In 1 Samuel 25 we read how a courageous and wise woman intervened on behalf of her husband, his shepherds and David.

David was on the run from the murderous threats of King Saul. He had with him a merry band of malcontents and outlaws that he had turned into a fighting force of 600 men (1 Sam. 22:2; 23:13). In the wilderness of Paran, he and his men acted as a protection force for shepherds and sheep for a man named Nabal. It was customary for protectors to receive some kind of gratuity at sheep-shearing time.

Nabal was “harsh and evil in his dealings” (1 Sam. 25:3). He was narrow-minded, disrespectful, offensive and miserly. His own wife, Abigail, said he was “worthless” and “he lives up to his name Nabal [fool], and stupidity is all he knows” (1 Sam. 25:25).

Abigail was “intelligent and beautiful” (1 Sam. 25:3). We know from her intervention and her interaction with David that she was very wise.

David expected Nabal to pay for his services. Nabal had no intention to

pay. David was so angry that he and 400 of his men put on swords to exact revenge. Nabal’s shepherds told Abigail what was happening. She quickly put together a lavish feast to take to David and his men.

When Abigail saw David, she fell at his feet (1 Sam. 25:23). She explained that Nabal was worthless. She asked him not to participate in bloodshed and not to take revenge. She reminded him that the LORD was making him

a lasting dynasty, fighting his battles and protecting him, and that he would rule over Israel (1 Sam. 25:26-

28). All she asked for was to be remembered. David was impressed with Abigail and gave the LORD credit for sending her to him (1 Sam. 25:32). He accepted her gift and her plea, and he granted her request.

When conflicts arise, don’t react like David. Be wise like Abigail. Abigail saw the larger picture. Get a godly perspective through prayer, the Scriptures and good counsel. Give the Lord praise for what He does in the situation.

### BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

#### Abigail: intervening faith

1 SAM. 25:2-3, 23-28, 32-35 (HCSB)

JUNE 30, 2019

It is easy to slip into corporate worship, sing some songs, say a prayer, listen to a sermon, and be totally detached from everyone around you. The late theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer said, “If we love, we can never observe the other person with detachment, for he is always and at every moment a living claim to our love and service.”

The church is a family, and no one person or group should feel detached from the rest. Paul gave specific instructions about how we are to intentionally love, respect and care for those in the church family.

In general terms, the elderly in the church should be treated with honor and respect like you would give your parents. Younger persons should be treated in the same way you would treat a brother or a sister. Special emphasis was given for the protection of the younger women.

Paul gave specific instructions and guidelines for the care of widows. Paul’s qualifications were to ascertain whether or not one was a true widow and if the

widow truly needed help. In the larger picture, Christians should work together to provide for those who cannot care for themselves: widows, abused, elderly, poor, sick, as well as those with special needs (Col. 3:12-17).

Paul also focused on pastors. Pastors were obligated to fulfill their callings, and the church was obligated to financially support and treat pastors with respect. Some pastors and leaders are

worthy of “double honor.” To understand “double honor,” it should be viewed in context. If the church

family is due honor, then those who lead surely must be worthy of twice the honor. As someone who loves to read and study the Scripture, it is a double honor to get to proclaim what I have studied and also do it as a vocation.

Paul gave instructions about handling conflicts and not showing partiality. Credibility in pastoral ministry is inseparably connected to impartial leadership. We must intentionally and responsibly care for all those whom God has entrusted to our care.

Last year Southern Baptists gave a record-breaking \$61.1 million to the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering. J.D. Greear, Southern Baptist Convention president, thanked Southern Baptists for showing “record-setting generosity to the North American Mission Board.” Our giving reflects our faith and trust in Christ.

While Jesus was teaching the crowd, a man interrupted him saying, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me” (Luke 12:13). Jesus told him He didn’t have au-

thority to decide a civil case. But Jesus did make a moral case. He told the man to “be on guard against all greed because one’s life is not in the abundance of his possessions” (Luke 12:15).

Jesus used a parable to illustrate His point. A rich man’s land was very productive. He planned to build big barns. Then he said he was going to “take it easy; eat, drink, and enjoy yourself” (Luke 12:19). God called him a fool and told him he would die that very night. His riches would have no

purchasing power after death. Jesus’ point was that one who stores up possessions for himself is not rich toward God (Luke 12:21).

The story of the widow’s gift shows the application (Luke 21:1-4) Jesus was teaching in the temple and noticed the rich dropping their offerings into the treasury boxes. These were elaborate boxes with funnel-looking things on the top where coins could be dropped.

The coins going down the funnel into the box made a loud noise.

The widow gave all she had to live on. She had nothing left. Jesus said, “This poor widow has put in more than all of them” (Luke 21:3). The rich gave out of their surplus; she gave out of her poverty. In reality, stewardship is judged on what you have left, not what you give. This is the lesson of the widow’s giving. The late Warren Wiersbe said, “Men see what is given, but God sees what is left, and by that He measures the gift and the condition of our hearts.” May we be rich toward God.

### BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

#### The poor widow: faith that gives

LUKE 12:13-21; 21:1-4 (HCSB)

## Featured commentary writer



Gerald Nash

**Gerald Nash** is a registered respiratory therapist and EEG technician at Saint Mary’s Regional Medical Center in Russellville. Nash is involved in medical research and is a preaching pastor at Soul Food Cafe Mission. He is involved in missions and also leads a small group and the decision room ministry at Second Baptist Church, Conway. Nash has attended several universities and seminaries, including Williams Baptist University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He holds multiple educational degrees, including a bachelor of arts in Christian ministries, a master of arts and doctor of ministry in pastoral studies and a master of arts in theological studies. Nash volunteers on the Cairo Geniza Project deciphering and transcribing ancient Greek and Arabic documents. He loves to read, bass fish and spend time with his family. He and his wife, Mary Ann, love to travel, explore ancient ruins and go on wild animal safaris.

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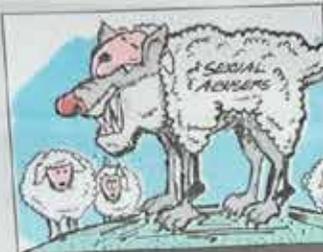
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