

ABN Digest

Stories of interest
to Arkansas Baptists

Disneyland Paris to host 'official' LGBTQ pride parade

PARIS – Disneyland Paris has announced it will be host its first-ever company-sponsored LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer) pride parade June 1. The event, called "Magical Pride," will include musical performances, meet-and-greets and a pride-themed parade, according to media reports.

While "Disney Gay Days" events focusing on the LGBTQ community have taken place at other Disney theme parks since 1991, the event in Paris is believed to be the first to be officially recognized by the company. While the events held in the early 1990s had only a few thousand people participate, in recent years those participating has risen to an estimated 50,000. Those supporting the event wear red to demonstrate their participation.

The Southern Baptist Convention and other conservative religious groups boycotted Walt Disney World from 1996 to 2005 after NBC News reported the growing popularity of "Disney Gay Days."

Gay Days Anaheim is an unofficial event set for Oct. 4-6, Fox News reported. In Florida, the LGBTQ community plans to convene in a hotel Aug. 13-19 for Gay Days Orlando at Walt Disney World.

"Diversity and equality are strong values at Disneyland Paris, and each year, we host millions of visitors regardless of their origins, gender or sexual orientation," a spokesperson for the Walt Disney Company told NBC News.

Disney as a brand has slowly started to include and embrace diversity and LGBTQ issues. Last year, Disney's "Beauty and the Beast," "Doc McStuffins," and "Star vs. the Forces of Evil" all featured gay characters.

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arkansasbaptist.org/abn-digest

Stories of faith: Celebrating Valentine's Day in Israel

Sarah Davis
Arkansas Baptist News

JERUSALEM – The sun was setting, and the garden was growing dark. A few scattered lights caused shadows to dance around the blooming flowers. It was Valentine's Day, but the weather in Jerusalem felt more like early spring in Arkansas.

I stood behind my camera recording the worship service taking place. A group of more than 300 people were crowded together singing hymns and lifting praises to God. I looked around at the group of strangers who all had tears streaming down their faces; one man in the front row was sobbing uncontrollably.

I was ecstatic when I found out I was going to Israel last fall. Mike Huckabee, an alumnus of Ouachita Baptist University, hires four students to staff his Israel tour – the Blue Diamond Travel Experience. I was chosen to go with three friends as a videographer.

When I found out I was going to be gone on Valentine's Day, I was even more thrilled. I have always been single throughout high school and college. While my parents

have always surprised me with gifts, I have never celebrated Valentine's Day. Israel doesn't celebrate Valentine's Day, and I wouldn't be around American college students who were in love.

I started the day as usual: I woke up, got ready and ate breakfast. As I walked to my tour bus, my driver was giving out long-stemmed red roses and a key chain that had a heart carved out of olive wood. I remembered at this time that it was Valentine's Day, and I accepted the gifts with joy. Maybe the holiday wasn't that bad after all.

That day, we made the journey of Jesus' last days on earth. We walked down to the Garden of Gethsemane where Jesus sweated blood while praying. We walked the streets of Jerusalem on the path known as the Via Dolorosa, which translates the "way of suffering." We saw Golgotha, which led us to our last stop: the garden tomb.

One by one, everyone in the tour stepped into the small tomb-like cave and looked around at where our Savior had at once lay, dead. There was a somber mood over the garden while we waited our



Sarah Davis poses for a photo outside of a "tomb-like cave" in Israel, where Jesus once lay following His death on the cross.

turn, and we all walked out of the tomb with our eyes full of tears.

We then gathered together to worship and praise God at the garden tomb. We observed the Lord's Supper, and we sat in awe and silence.

Reflecting on the day and sites seen, I was also crying behind the camera. Never before in history was a greater love story told, not by Shakespeare or Jane Austen.

My God, the great and powerful Creator of the universe, came down as a lowly baby who lived a perfect life, only

to suffer a horrific death on the cross for me. He didn't have to, but He loved me that much. I was worth it to God; I was precious enough that He chose to die.

When I celebrated Valentine's Day in Israel, I was thrilled. John 15:13 says, "Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends" (NIV).

There was no better way to celebrate Valentine's Day, and I got to celebrate it with 300 of my closest friends.

Contact Sarah Davis at sarah@arkansasbaptist.org.

LATE-TERM

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third trimester."

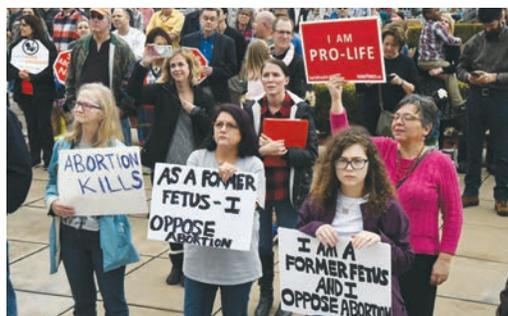
In addition to New York, the following district and states have existing laws permitting late-term abortion: Alaska, Colorado, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, Oregon, Vermont and the District of Columbia, according to christianpost.com.

"What is more, every state that has laws banning late-term abortions still allow it under certain circumstances, one of which can include 'mental health' – a loophole in abortion rights law large enough through which a locomotive could pass," christianpost.com reported.

In the days following New York's legalization of late-term abortion, Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam, affirmed late-term abortion, but also seemed to affirm taking the life of a baby after birth.

Northam's comments came

on WTOP's "Ask the Governor" radio program and were in response to a question regarding Virginia Delegate Kathy Tran's statement, before a Virginia House of Delegates subcommittee questioning her



Scene from the 2018 Arkansas March for Life held in Little Rock. Photo by Caleb Yarbrough

proposed bill that, by her own admission, would allow abortions up to the point a woman is giving birth.

"The consent of obviously the mother, with consent of the physician, multiple physicians by the way, and it's done in cases where there may be severe deformities or there may be a fetus that's not viable," Northam said Jan. 30.

"So in this particular example, if a mother is in labor, I can tell you exactly what would happen. The infant would be delivered. The infant would be kept comfortable. The infant would be resuscitated if that's what the mother and the family desired, and then a discussion would ensue between the physicians and the mother," Northam said.

After seeing celebrations in the New York assembly hall following Cuomo's signing the RHA into law, Vardeman said he began praying and seeking answers. God led him to Psalm 106, in which the

Psalmist lists the sins of Israel, including sacrificing their sons and daughters to idols.

"When we murder our children in the womb it's still the same demonic forces that we are sacrificing them to," said Vardeman. "Instead of a graven image of Molech, with fires kindled underneath and throwing our infants on the pyre, we are now

sacrificing them to the idols of convenience and politics.

"Satan will murder millions of infants to destroy the image of God in the world," he said.

Arkansas Senate Bill (SB) 149, which would make abortion illegal in the state if the U.S. Supreme Court were to reverse *Roe v. Wade* or allow states to ban abortion, cleared the Senate's Public Health, Welfare and Labor Committee Feb. 6.

If passed, SB149 would provide an exception, allowing abortions in the case of a medical emergency threatening the mother's life. The law would also prohibit contraceptives after a pregnancy can be detected, according to the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*.

"Under SB149, women who receive abortions would not be criminally charged, but doctors who perform abortions would be guilty of a felony and could be fined up to \$100,000 and imprisoned for up to 10 years," the *Democrat-Gazette* reported.

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ECON

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“Facing the Giants,” spoke about churches focusing their discipleship ministry on men.

“In the movie world, movies will specifically market for 18- to 24-year-old men,” said Kendrick. “If they can hit that demographic, they get everyone. If they specifically aim a movie at men, they will get women, too.”

Kendrick said that men are walking away from the church because pastors are targeting women.

“Men are now searching for conquests and adventures like fishing or hunting or sports,” said Kendrick. “They want battles and explosions and good versus evil because they are bored with modern Christianity.”

Kendrick gave ministry leaders 10 ways to reach men, including praying for godly men, challenging men to step up, proclaiming God’s Word unapologetically and setting up men’s discipleship that will equip them.

“Churches that are making a big impact are those who are focusing their ministry on men,” said Kendrick.

Charlie Dates

Speaking from Romans 11, Dates shared a message titled, “What’s so amazing about grace?” Dates is senior pastor of Progressive Baptist Church in Chicago.

“Paul’s argument is clear; human rejection does not frustrate divine sovereignty,” said Dates.

“Preachers” are an eclectic group, said Dates, and their conversion stories are often some of the “most intriguing around.”

Dates shared the story of John Wesley, who – by his own admission – preached “for 10 years on both sides of the Atlantic” before he himself was converted.

“We need grace not only to keep us from unbelief; we need grace to keep us believing,” said Dates. “Your ministry and my ministry are proof that grace works.”

Paul pointed to himself and his ethnic association with Israel, as well as his personal rebellion from his ethnic faith as “proof positive that God is

not going to throw away His people.

“The Bible makes the bold claim that God, in eternity past, picked us before we picked Him,” said Dates. “The thoughtful, Bible-reading Christian claims that God found them.

“God’s foreknowledge outruns human research,” said Dates.

Paul Chitwood

“I find it interesting that as God closed His book, He closed it with a clear message about His Son,” Chitwood said, speaking from Revelation 22, the last chapter in the Bible.

Sharing how his father raised him and his two brothers as a single parent in a small mountain town, Chitwood said that, when he was four years old, a Baptist deacon knocked on their door and invited them to church.

Chitwood said that the church welcomed his family, their faults and all. He said that when he first started attending church as a child, there was more talk about the imminent return of Christ than there is today.

“If the bride isn’t longing to see her groom, might it be that another love has stolen her heart?” asked Chitwood.

“There is a groom that has promised to come, and the promise that He has made carries great importance for us,”

said Chitwood. “What does this mean for us?”

“He has left us here for a purpose. ... He has left us here to tell them that He is coming,” said Chitwood.

Christ’s coming is imminent, and it’s exclusive. Chitwood stressed the importance of believers sharing Christ with the lost because only those who place their faith in Jesus are among those whom Christ is coming back for.

“The Lord Jesus isn’t coming for the world; He is coming for His sons and His daughters,” said Chitwood.

David Allen

Allen, dean of the school of preaching and George W. Truett Chair of Pastoral Ministry at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, spoke about the

meaninglessness of life Solomon wrote about in Ecclesiastes.

“Vanity of vanities. All is vanity,” said Allen. “What does vanity mean? The Hebrew word used by Solomon 38 times is a word that literally means breath, mist, smoke, vapor.”

Like Solomon, people today search for purpose and meaning in their short lives through education, alcohol, work, materialism and relationships. The more Solomon was gratified, the less he was satisfied, said Allen.

“All of these things lead to emptiness and nothingness. Wisdom, wine, education and everything else will never bring you what you want in life,” he said. “Even though Solomon was a pessimist at times, he wasn’t an atheist because everything that is under the sun is also under the Son. Jesus is the One Who gives meaning.”

Every little thing matters to God and so does every person, said Allen.

Luke Harper and Brad Lewter

Harper and Lewter each spoke on the necessity of reaching young people, who will make up the next and future generations of the Church. Harper is student pastor of Cross Church, Fayetteville, and Lewter is senior pastor of Grand Avenue Baptist Church in Fort Smith.

Harper spoke from 2 Chronicles 33-35 and 2 Kings 23. He also shared about a young man from low-income housing in Fayetteville who stepped away from church for two years before calling Harper and telling him, “I don’t know what I’m doing with my life right now, but I know that when I am away from church I don’t like how I am.”

Josiah was one of the greatest kings in Israel’s history because he turned to God with “reckless abandon,” said Harper.

“Churches, we have Josiahs in our state. We have Josiahs in our public schools. We have Josiahs in our very homes,” said Harper. “Our job is not to hope it works out; our job is to get on our knees before a loving God and beg Him daily that He would reveal Himself to the youth of this state because I firmly believe that if He would, then our nation would

feel the ripple effects, from Little Rock, Ark., and the rest of our state, and would never be the same,” said Harper.

Lewter shared from Matthew 28.

“We’ve got to reach the next generation,” said Lewter.

Lewter shared three things that his church has discovered helpful in reaching the next generation: 1) learn the next generation, 2) like the next generation and 3) launch the next generation.

During his message, Lewter convened a panel consisting of young adults from the Fort Smith area.

The young adults shared their thoughts on how churches and individuals can better partner with them in ministry and discipleship.

The panelists included that it is important that mentors and church leaders get to know them, invest in them, live life together with them, encourage them into leadership and walk alongside them in leadership positions.

Robert Smith

Smith, Charles T. Carter Baptist Chair of Divinity at Samford University’s Beeson Divinity School in Birmingham, Ala., asked ECON attendees: “Can justice and mercy co-exist?”

He added, “Can justice and mercy live together? It can only be answered in the person of Christ.”

Smith shared the story of Jonah, who was called by God to go to Nineveh. Instead of obeying God, Jonah ran from the idea of sharing God’s Word with the evil Ninevites.

“It’s like a Jewish Holocaust survivor being sent to Adolf Hitler to preach to them for the purpose of them being saved,” said Smith. “Or it’s like someone from the Civil Rights movement being sent to Ku Klux Klan members with the word of salvation.”

Like God called Jonah, God calls His people to minister to “nasty people,” Smith said.

“Your ministry will never reach its heights until you learn to love that sinner,” he said. “God is the God of justice and mercy, and, on the cross, you can see how justice and mercy co-exist.”



Chitwood



Dates



Smith

ABN Digest

Stories of interest
to Arkansas Baptists

Georgia Baptists reportedly eliminates 20 positions

DULUTH, Ga. – Due to a \$1.2 million shortfall in Cooperative Program (CP) giving in 2018, the Georgia Baptist Mission Board (GBMB) started the new year by downsizing its staff, reportedly eliminating 20 positions Jan. 22.

The giving dip represents 3 percent of the board’s \$40 million budget, but the 20 positions represent 12 percent of the approximately 170 state missionaries serving through the GBMB.

While a list of the eliminated positions had not been released at press time, unconfirmed reports indicate that the position of the leader of Georgia Baptist men’s ministries was eliminated, perhaps the highest ranking position among the 20 eliminated.

“At this time, we have no further comment than what is in the *Christian Index* article (Jan. 22),” Mark Strange, GBMB’s lead state missionary for communications, told the *Arkansas Baptist News* in written comments Jan. 25. “Out of respect of those impacted by the downsizing, we are not going to release a listing of those employees.”

Addressing GBMB staff Jan. 3, Georgia Baptist Executive Director W. Thomas Hammond, Jr., used a widow’s mite replica to illustrate Georgia Baptists’ sacrificial giving and the Mission Board’s responsibility in using those funds wisely, the *Index* reported Jan. 18.

Perhaps foreshadowing the reported downsizing to come less than three weeks following his Jan. 3 address, Hammond discussed a narrowing of GBMB’s focus while restructuring staff over the next few months, “I’m asking all Georgia Baptists to be praying for God to grant us wisdom as we make these critical decisions in the days ahead.”

For more ABN Digest, go to
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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)

The stench of legal abortion continues

Think about the joy and excitement a couple experiences when expecting a new baby.

There is anticipation of a new life entering the world, not only by the parents-to-be, but also among grandparents, other family members and friends.

Expectant parents consider names and what the gender of the baby might be. Today, with advances in medical science and technology, parents often know the gender of the baby months before the child is born, prompting them to purchase baby clothes and outfit a new nursery.

Grandparents and friends join in the celebration of the expected child, showering the soon-to-be parents with baby gifts and well-wishes.

Now, in your mind's eye, think about a garbage heap. Think about how smelly it is and how no one in his or her right mind would want to live in the midst of a pile of trash.

For me, the smell of rotting trash and refuse makes me recall, as a small boy on the southeast Missouri farm where I grew up, when our septic tank had to be replaced.

When workers breached the containment area of the septic tank where the waste was housed, a terrible stench permeated the air around our property. It's something I vividly recall to this day.

I remember when a big machine was brought to the site to remove the waste and how, after the septic tank was rebuilt, our lives were so much better! After a few days,

the odor left; life went back to normal and we forgot about the septic tank buried deep in the ground.

Last week the stench of abortion once again raised its ugly head in America, serving as a vivid reminder of

how far our great nation has fallen and abandoned the tenets of God.

The stench began in

the United States when the Supreme Court legalized abortion in 1973 in the *Roe v. Wade* decision. In the 46 years that have passed, it is estimated that more than 60 million unborn children have been killed in the womb and never given the opportunity to live their lives.

It's a shameful and evil stain on our country, but as we witnessed in recent weeks – unbelievably – it can get worse.

New York's Gov. Andrew Cuomo signed into law Jan. 22 the Reproductive Health Act (RHA), affirming complete, unfettered access to on-demand abortion – up to the day of delivery – as a basic female right.

On the heels of the New York law, Virginia lawmakers passed a law that significantly loosened existing restrictions on abortion in the final three months of pregnancy. Previously in New York, third-trimester abortions were permitted only if three doctors certified that a woman's health otherwise would be "substantially or irretrievably" impaired. Under the new law, only the physician performing the abortion must provide that certification, and

the "substantially or irretrievably" language is dropped, according to media reports, in favor of a provision that allows for an exception if the continuation of the pregnancy is determined to "impair the mental or physical health of the woman."

Basically the intentionally vague language means that a baby may be killed for practically any reason that is seen as impairing "the mental or physical health of the woman" – which can mean anything.

This is infanticide plain and simple.

Given this fact, when will the politicians start euthanizing old people they consider to be burdens to society?

I am not being overly dramatic. When the human hearts of those in authority become so hardened and corrupt – emitting the stench of sewer waste – the doing away of the misfits and undesirables can't be far behind.

The late Robert Hayden Mounce, an American New Testament scholar, and president emeritus of Whitworth University in Spokane, Wash., wrote in one of his New Testament commentaries on Revelation, "The worship of the satanically

inspired perversion of secular authority is the ultimate offense against the one true God. The temptation rejected by Jesus at the outset of his public ministry reappears at

the end of history in its most persuasive form and gains the allegiance of all but the elect."

May God give us wisdom and courage in these

dark days as we seek to be the light of Jesus Christ to a lost and dying world.

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



Pressing On

Tim Yarbrough

Phil. 3:14

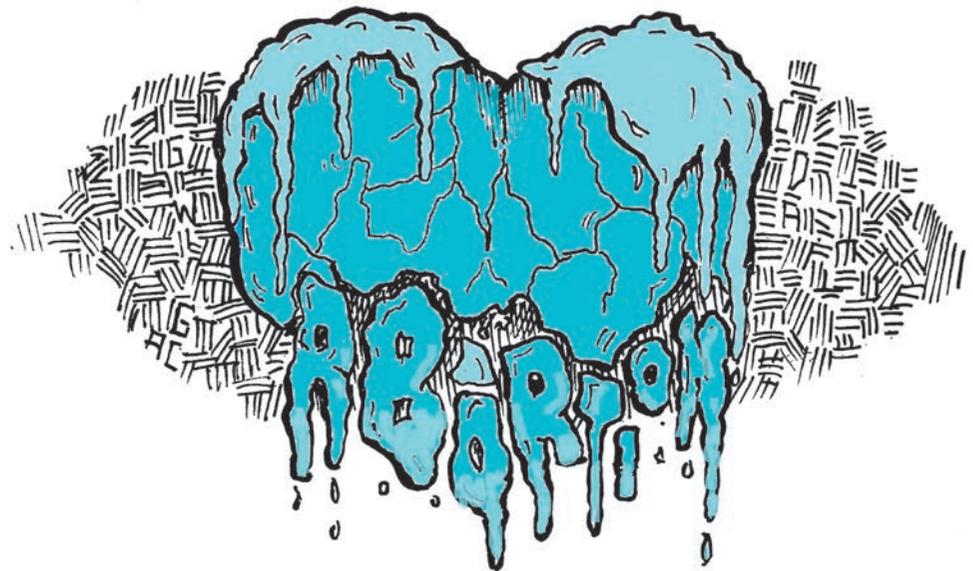
The Democrat Party and the question of late-term abortion

PERSPECTIVES

Read article online at arkansasbaptist.org

Cartoon by Gary Thomas

News Item: New York Passes Law Legalizing Late Term Abortions



"AND BECAUSE INIQUITY SHALL ABOUND, THE LOVE OF MANY SHALL WAX COLD." MATTHEW 24:12

G. THOMAS '19
ARK. BAPTIST NEWS



Volume 118, Number 3
USPS08021

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

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

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

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

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

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

Little Rock, AR 72204.

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If God is all-knowing, why did the wickedness of humans cause Him to grieve that He had created them (Gen. 6:6)?

This verse, an early section of the Noah story, creates a perplexing issue: Why would God create human beings if He knew they would become so wicked? Why would God create something that would cause Him so much pain?

The word translated “grieve” is the Hebrew word *naham*, which has multiple meanings: “sorry,” “repent,” “regret”



Baptists Ask

Ken Gore

and “grief” being among them. The same word is found also in 1 Samuel 15:35, a verse that states the Lord regretted, or was grieved, that he had made

Saul king over Israel. In both instances, God regretted that He had done something.

There appears to be three possible interpretations to this verse. The traditional view holds that God’s reaction is anthropomorphic (understanding God in human terms). God was deeply concerned about humanity’s wicked behavior, but the narrator portrayed His response in human emotions. This makes it easier for the readers to understand.

The “openness of God” view holds that God’s grief was reactive, for He was surprised that such evil of mankind would occur. Since God moves through time just like humans do, He reacts to human beings as events unfold. Such a view, however, does not fare well with those who believe that God cannot change His mind (God’s immutability).

A third view, found in John Walton’s Genesis commentary, understands the term *naham* as portraying the image of an accountant’s ledger or a balancing scale. Because humanity had committed this grievous sin in Genesis 6, something had to be done to counterbalance it. Such an equilibrium could be created through either the people’s repentance or punishment; it was up to them as to how they would react to God.

Although the anthropomorphic view of the verse is the most popular interpretation, the narrator might be conveying something greater. Perhaps he portrayed God in much the same way parents would react when watching their own children do wrong. Children often rebel, and they say and do things that hurt their parents, sometimes to the point of grief. Nevertheless, parents rarely regret their children, because they know the great joy that children have brought to them. Perhaps this is how God felt with humanity in Genesis 6. Even in His grief, God waited nearly 100 years before He punished them because He wanted to see if humanity might repent.

Genesis 6 portrays how great humanity’s wickedness had become; it also shows how great God’s love is. Even in God’s grief, He provided them time to save themselves from the impending flood. God’s love still shines forth through His grief: “While we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8b, NIV).

Ken Gore is professor of biblical studies at Dallas Baptist University.

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The Author and His storybook

The musty locker room was intense with anticipation. Beady-eyed players fixated on Coach Deromedi, a short, bald, but fiery Italian, as he stepped up onto a wooden award platform to address the team.

Eighty football players hungry to compete were hanging on his every word. His words were

short but empowering. He told the players a story about General George Patton who inspired his troops by saying, and I paraphrase, “No one ever won a war by dying for his country. He won it by making the enemy die for his country. Now go out there and take it to them.”

The locker room exploded with cheers and yells. The coach had rallied the players’ emotions, focusing their intensity on the game at hand. Then all 80 men tried to squeeze through a single door as fast as possible to take it to their enemy – a highly inefficient process.

Locker-room talks have

inspired many players to play above their abilities and achieve great results. A coach who thoughtfully weaves a story of inspiration can inspire people to live, work or play above their levels.

In John 14-17, Jesus prepared His disciples to live

above their levels during very difficult days. I have studied these chapters

Camp Siloam

Jason Wilkie



in Scripture more than any other. They seem to be the heart of Jesus’ work on earth. At the Arkansas Baptist State Convention’s statewide prayer gathering last August, Bill Elliff, pastor of The Summit Church in North Little Rock, talked about these chapters, calling them Jesus’ “locker-room talk.”

I had never thought of these chapters as a locker-room talk before because the disciples seemed to respond with confusion more than motivation. While Jesus’ message was exactly the opposite of Coach Deromedi’s (Jesus taught dying to self and persecution unto death), Jesus

described the relationship the Father desires through reconciliation with His children and then He prayed. Jesus described the relationship He desires for us as “one with the Father.”

Each summer Camp Siloam takes a concept or story from Scripture and writes a parallel story that illustrates the biblical concepts in Scripture in a creative and memorable way. John 17:21 (CSB) is the Scripture we will focus on this summer. Jesus prayed for all believers saying, “May they all be one, as You, Father, are in Me and I am in You. May they be one in Us, so that the world may believe You have sent Me.”

Our story at Camp Siloam this summer uses the relationship between the Author and His storybook characters as a metaphor for this incredible relationship the Heavenly Father desires for us. How do we accomplish this? You’ll have to come and see. I hope you enjoy it.

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

Render unto Caesar less

In 2017, the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act was passed as the first overhaul of the United States tax code since 1986. While we can debate the pros and cons of the tax code, determining the best way to steward our assets in a God-honoring manner is a worthwhile endeavor.

For those tithing regularly, there are strategies under the new tax laws

that allow a more tax-efficient way to ensure we don’t render unto Caesar more than his share.

Currently, the standard deduction has been increased to \$24,000 at the federal level for a couple filing jointly, or \$12,000 for a single filer. This means that if a couple’s or individual’s itemized deductions don’t exceed the above-mentioned thresholds, they will claim the standard deduction.

Accordingly, more couples or individuals will no longer itemize their deductions at the federal level. Statisticians

and charities alike are concerned charitable giving will decrease because of the lack of “incentive” for a charitable deduction with the larger federal standard deduction. We know Christians have a biblical mandate to deploy what God has blessed us

with for the advancement of the gospel regardless of the economic or taxation

system in place, though the statistics behind tithing indicate that our church members do not share this sentiment. Therefore, believers should continue, or begin, tithing and making charitable gifts and should consider the following if persuaded by the tax implications:

1) Standard deduction at the state level. The standard deduction at the state level in Arkansas is reached at \$2,200 and \$4,400 for single and married filers respectively. Accordingly, you will itemize at the state level when your deductions get above and

beyond \$2,200.

2) Give in a manner that bypasses taxation. If you have an Individual Retirement Account (IRA) and are 70½ years of age or older, consider making Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCD) from your IRA. The amount distributed through a QCD is excluded from your taxable income. Additionally, give appreciated assets, not cash. This way you can bypass any potential capital gains tax.

3) Bunching. Make your charitable contributions every other year. This enables you to “bunch” two years of giving into one to meet the standard deduction threshold.

Please note that the information contained in this article does not constitute legal or tax advice and you should consult with your own legal counsel or tax preparer about your situation. If you have questions about the Foundation services, please contact us at 501-376-4791.

Dillon McClain is vice president and attorney at the Arkansas Baptist Foundation.



Baptist Foundation

Dillon McClain

Ministers' wives find 'strength in numbers' during conf.

Sarah Davis
Arkansas Baptist News

LITTLE ROCK - Arkansas Baptist women shared fellowship and encouraged one another in ministry Jan. 29 at the Ministers' Wives Workshop immediately following the 2019 statewide Conference on Evangelism and Church Health at Geyer Springs First Baptist Church in Little Rock.

The workshop was led by Lisa George, wife of the senior pastor at First Baptist Church in Rogers, and hosted by the Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC).

"When my husband and I first started out in the ministry, it was exciting, and it was amazing. I was ready to attack hell with a water gun," said George.

George encouraged the women to shout out feelings they have faced in ministry. "Loneliness" and "inadequacy" were mentioned, but "fear" was the word most used.

"At some point during our ministry, fear settles in, and we become overwhelmed," said George. "Fear is mentioned hundreds of times in the Bible because it's an emotion we all deal with, no matter where we are in life. Fear is common to

us and to those whom we uphold in Scripture."

George shared the story of Abram being called by God. She said when Abram first packed his belongings - moving away from his family with his wife and nephew - he started off excited. As time passed and he remained childless, Abram became afraid of not fulfilling God's calling.

"God came to Abram and told him not to be afraid. God was his protector, shield and reward," said George. "We are given these stories to encourage us. They are not just Old Testament Bible stories. These are to radically change our lives."

Around tables, women shared current fears in their lives. Some mentioned fears included ailing parents, salvation of adult children and a new ministry of foster care one family feels called to.

"I like that we can get together and be open to one another, knowing that it's going to stay here," said Debbie Smith, wife of Tom Smith, pastor at Vine Prairie Baptist Church in Mulberry.

Other women found encouragement through the community offered by the workshop.

"It bolsters me on to be

with other wives who are walking the same walk and doing the same journey of helping our husbands in the ministry," said Judy Shaddox, wife of Ken Shaddox, senior pastor at Park Hill Baptist Church in North Little Rock, and ministry assistant for the ABSC's church health team. "There's always strength in numbers."

J.D. "Sonny" Tucker, executive director of the ABSC, also spoke words of encouragement to the women during the workshop.

"It's a real special and unique place you have in ministry," said Tucker. "Your husband needs you more than you



Lisa George, wife of Wes George, senior pastor of First Baptist Church, Rogers, speaks during the Ministers Wives Conference, a part of ECON held Jan. 29.

know, and he needs your support more than you know."

Contact Sarah Davis at sarah@arkansasbaptist.org.

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Kendrick: Ministry is dependent on prayer

LITTLE ROCK - Stephen Kendrick, Christian writer and producer, led the Arkansas Baptist State Convention Prayer Leaders Workshop Jan. 28 prior to the start of the 2019 Conference on Evangelism and Church Health at Geyer Springs First Baptist Church, Little Rock.

The workshop was for individuals who are prayer leaders in their families, churches and communities.

"Every ministry and every local church are ultimately dependent on effective prayer," said Kendrick.

He emphasized that effective evangelism, successful dis-

cipleship and true fellowship are dependent on prayer.

"When it comes to prayer ministry, you have to have it in your mind: ongoing battle," said Kendrick. "It's an ongoing battle to get your people to pray. It's an ongoing battle to keep your people focused. It's an ongoing battle against the flesh, against your enemy and all those distractions of the world."

Listen to a podcast with Kendrick at arkansasbaptist.org/podcast, or watch on the *Arkansas Baptist News* YouTube channel at arkansasbaptist.org/ArkBaptNews.



Kendrick

Preschool & Children's Ministry Leadership Conference

Saturday, Feb. 23, 2019

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absc.org/kidsconference

Arkansas
BAPTISTS

Inspire: Annual women's event set to encourage and equip

Margaret Colson
Arkansas Baptist News

ARKANSAS Baptist women, if you want to be inspired to live a radiant life for Jesus,

make plans to attend the upcoming Inspire event designed just for you.

The Arkansas Baptist State Convention is hosting its sixth annual Inspire women's event,

8:15 a.m. to 4 p.m., Saturday, March 9, at First Baptist Church, Russellville.

"We are excited to offer

an opportunity for the women of Arkansas to gather for a one-day conference that has the potential to change the direction of their lives. We will worship together, pray together and open God's Word together. As women, we tend to put the needs of others before our own. As a result, many women are running on empty. Inspire offers an opportunity for women to experience a fresh move of God in



Crossword key, see crossword page 9

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John & Marie Gorgas
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their lives. I truly believe that God will meet us in such a profound way at Inspire 2019 that everyone who attends will be refreshed, challenged and changed," said Andrea Lennon, Arkansas Baptists' women's ministry specialist, serving on the evangelism and church health team.

Inspire will provide powerful worship, dynamic speakers and practical breakout sessions for women of all ages and stages of life.

The theme for this year's Inspire is Radiant. This theme will set the tone for the day as attendees focus on how to shine bright for Jesus in a dark world, Lennon said.

Keynote speaker for the event is women's ministry speaker and author Marian Jordan Ellis of Redeemed Girl Ministries. Worship leaders are Robert and Brooke Ramsey, from First Baptist Church, Russellville, where Robert serves as worship pastor and Brooke serves as women's ministry leader.

A variety of breakout sessions will be offered by Lori McDaniel, Jennifer Francis, Jennifer Mills, Renee Cross, Angela Mackey, Jamie Naramore and Lennon. Cheryl Harp will lead a special breakout time for ministers' wives. Each breakout session will relate to the day's theme and will challenge women to apply God's Word deep in their hearts as well as in every area of their lives.

"I am already praying for the women who will attend Inspire! My prayer is for the women to be encouraged to

embrace the life God has for them - a life of freedom and hope and power. The key verse for the day says it all! 'Those who look to him are radiant; their faces are never covered with shame' (Psa. 34:5, NIV). We can live a shame-free life. We can shine bright for Jesus as we encounter His love, grace and forgiveness. This will position us to demonstrate daily to others the difference Jesus makes in us. For just a moment, let's imagine what it would be like for the women of Arkansas to be radiant with the love of Jesus! The impact would be felt in every home, church and community. Not only that, the impact would be felt around our state, nation and world!" said Lennon.

Women attending Inspire are also invited to participate in a ministry project. This year's project will benefit Joseph's House, a ministry developed to support and encourage foster families and foster children of Pope County. Women are encouraged to bring any of the following items to support Joseph's House: baby wash, baby shampoo, diaper cream, shave gel for boys and girls, Chap Stick, hairbands and barrettes, feminine products, body lotion, sunscreen, shampoo and conditioner and body wash.

For more information on Inspire, visit absc.org/inspire. For more information on Ellis, visit redeemedgirl.org. For more information on Joseph's House, visit josephshouseofrussellville.com.

Contact Margaret Colson at margaret@arkansasbaptist.org.

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Arkansas BAPTISTS

Correction

Penny and Ray Taffar, who served as self-supporting missionaries in Belize, learned firsthand the truth of Proverbs 3:5-6 (KJV), "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths," in their mission work in the Central American country. The Taffar's last name was misspelled in the article appearing in the Jan. 31 edition of *Arkansas Baptist News* (ABN). The ABN regrets the error.

One year later: Church finds unity following disaster

HARRISON - "The church is the people, not the building," said Kenny Stacy, pastor of Eagle Heights Baptist Church in Harrison. "That statement has really provided our people with a sense of mission in a major way."

It's been more than a year since disaster struck the church. On Dec. 9, 2017, an intoxicated driver hit a utility pole, resulting in the pole igniting the corner of the church building. The oldest portion of the historic church suffered

the most damage.

"Our people recognize that life is much more than coming together on a campus," said Stacy. "I think the adjustment that our people have been able to experience has been one of unity - coming together for our mission, which is to serve, reach and disciple people with the life-saving gospel of Jesus Christ. I think the incident has been a wake-up call to come back to a unified focus on accomplishing our mission."

Eagle Heights is in the pro-

cess of remodeling the existing structure that survived the fire. The worship center is being turned into a multi-purpose building for smaller worship

gatherings, youth services and conferences. The children's wing is being reconstructed into an educational space.

The church is currently

finalizing an architectural layout for a new 22,000-square-foot building it plans to begin constructing at the end of June.

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Gospel Games

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

2 Timothy 2:5 (CSB)

Color this famous deliverer from the book of Judges.



"And he found a new jawbone of an ass, and put forth his hand, and took it, and slew a thousand men therewith. Judges 15:15"

Across

- 1. Father of Naum (Luke 3:25)
- 2. Female animal parent
- 8. "Hath God ___ away his people?" (Romans 11:1)
- 12. "he armed him with a ___ of mail" (1 Samuel 17:38)
- 13. Historic period
- 14. Author of Proverbs 30
- 15. Hair groomer
- 16. Home (abbr.)
- 17. Son of Melchi (Luke 3:27)
- 18. Father of Hophni and Phineas (1 Samuel 2)
- 20. What Peter's friend Simon would do (Acts 10)
- 22. "For the words are ___ up till the end of time" (Daniel 12:9)
- 25. Book of the Pentateuch
- 29. "But I will ___ far off from the northern army" (Joel 2:20)
- 30. Eye membrane
- 31. Popular contraction
- 32. Muscle spasm
- 33. Scat!

- 37. "I have not hastened from being a ___ to follow you" (Jeremiah 17:16)
- 40. "I cry in the daytime,...and in the night___" (Psalm 22:2)
- 41. A son of Rizpah and Saul (2 Samuel 21, var.)
- 42. Salaried player (abbr.)
- 43. Roman 901
- 44. "the promise is to...all that are ___ off" (Acts 2:39)
- 47. "the Lord hath called by name Bezeleel the son of ___" (Exodus 35:30)
- 49. Pronoun
- 53. "I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and ___" (Isaiah 43:3)
- 54. Arabic letter
- 55. "Lord, ___ mercy on my son" (Matthew 17:15)
- 56. "ye shall carry up my bones ___ with you" (Exodus 13:19)
- 57. Casual greeting
- 58. Hied

Down

- 1. O.T. book subtitled "The Preacher" (KJV)
- 2. Late actor Jack
- 3. O.T. book
- 4. "If ___, why am I thus?" (Genesis 25:22)
- 5. "they shall ___ every strong hold" (Habakkuk 1:10)
- 6. Linking verb
- 7. "If I be a ___, where is my fear?" (Malachi 1:6)
- 8. "the heaven of heavens ___ contain thee" (1 Kings 8:27)
- 9. Era
- 10. Big ___
- 11. ___glyceride
- 19. Bk. of the Pentateuch
- 21. Tool not heard at the site of Solomon's temple (1 Kings 6)
- 22. Mangers
- 23. Quay
- 24. "I am Alpha and ___" (Revelation 1:8)
- 26. Duplicate

- 27. Lincoln's lads
- 28. Holy (Fr.)
- 34. Fowl not to be eaten (Leviticus 11)
- 35. Conjunction
- 36. Sufficient
- 37. "The wrath of a king is as... death: but a wise man will ___ it" (Proverbs 16:14)
- 38. "And to whom is the ___ of the Lord revealed?" (Isaiah 53:1)
- 39. "And he carried away all Jerusalem...all the...___" (2 Kings 24:14)
- 44. Third king of Judah
- 45. Handful
- 46. Judicial junta (abbr.)
- 48. Woman's name
- 50. "her ___ was to light on a... field belonging to Boaz" (Ruth 2:3)
- 51. Blvd.
- 52. "Nightline" nickname

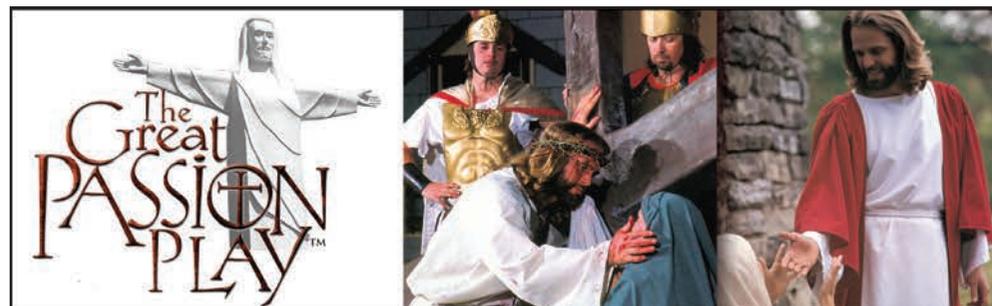
Crossword by Barbour Publishing, Inc.

arkansasbaptist.org

ABN Crossword puzzle

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Crossword answer key on page 7



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Obituaries

William Dean "Bill" Knoll, 76, of Stuttgart, died Jan. 10.

A retired farmer, Knoll helped form New Life Fellowship Church, DeWitt, in 2000. He was the Hannah Hyatt Award recipient for his leadership in building a horse barn at the Arkansas Baptist Children's Home in Monticello.

He is survived by his wife, two sisters, three children, four grandchildren and one great-grandson.

A memorial service was held Saturday, Jan. 12, at New Life Fellowship Church.

Carl Bud Vandiver, 98, of Prescott, died Jan. 30.

A WWII veteran, Vandiver received a Purple Heart and a Bronze Medal for his service. He was the owner of Bud's Auto Parts in Prescott and a deacon at First Baptist Church, Prescott.

Vandiver was preceded in death by his parents, sister and wife, Rene Glass Vandiver.

He is survived by two

daughters, Kay Compton and Anne Franks; four grandchildren, Tom Compton, Doug Compton, Robbie Franks and Andy Franks; and four great-grandchildren, Jessica Thornton, Jared Compton, Levi Compton and Lane Compton.

The funeral was held Feb. 2 at First Baptist Church, Prescott.

Harold Eugene Ray, 84, of West Memphis, died Jan. 31.

A retired Baptist minister, Ray previously served as the Tri-County Baptist Association's director of missions.

He was preceded in death by his wife, parents and a brother.

Ray is survived by his daughter, two sons, four grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

A funeral service was held Monday, Feb. 4 at Calvary Baptist Church in West Memphis.

Dale Wayne Robinson, 60, of Bauxite, died Jan. 20.

Robinson worked as a diesel mechanic and served as deacon at Pleasant Hill Baptist Church, Bauxite.

He was preceded in death by his parents and sister. He is survived by his wife, son, two sisters and two brothers.

A memorial service was held Feb. 9 at Jones Cemetery.

Church life

Marshall Road Baptist Church, Jacksonville, will host a wild game and fish dinner at 6 p.m., Feb. 23. The event will include a wild game dish and dessert contests, door prizes and a grand prize drawing.

Calvary Baptist Church, Little Rock, will host a Parenting with Love and Leadership Seminar at 2 p.m., Feb. 24.

Woodland Heights Baptist Church, Conway, will host Chonda Pierce March 7. For more information, visit awakeningevents.com.

Baptist life

North Pulaski Baptist Association will host a prayer gathering focused on the association's people, churches and mission work at 5 p.m. on March 28, at First Baptist Church, Sherwood.

STAFF WANTED

Houseparents:

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Contact:

Roger Langlie at (870) 741-5784 or rlanglie@arkansasfamilies.org.

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Classifieds

PASTOR

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

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

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

Clear Lake Baptist Church in Blytheville, Arkansas is seeking a **full-time pastor**. Please prayerfully consider this before you apply: our church earnestly desires a man who is called to the ministry of church growth. Candidates should email complete resumes to: office@clearlakechurch.org.

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

Hamburg First Baptist Church is prayerfully seeking a **full-time pastor**. Please send resume to First Baptist Church Pastor Search Committee, 203 E. Parker St., Hamburg, AR 71646 or email to fbchbg.office@gmail.com. For more information, you may call the church office at

870-853-5520.

First Baptist Church, Hector, is seeking a **bi-vocational pastor**. Send resume to 801 East 16th Street, Russellville, AR 72801, or email: arvba@suddenlink.net.

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

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

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

OTHER STAFF POSITIONS

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

Ebenezer Baptist Church, El Dorado, AR, is receiving resumes for a **part-time minister**

of youth with more responsibilities during the summer. Please send resume to: Youth Minister Search Committee, Ebenezer Baptist Church, 1942 North Wyatt Dr., El Dorado, AR 71730.

Sheridan First Baptist is seeking a **part-time student minister**. Looking for someone to plan and implement a comprehensive program of Christian development for students in an already established 7th-12th grade student ministry program. Send resume to pwest@windstream.net.

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

Crossgate Church, Hot Springs is seeking a **full-time pastor to students and young adults**. Looking for a strong leader to connect with students by leading, equipping and sending them out for ministry. Experience and a seminary degree preferred but not required. Send resume to brian@crossgate.org.

We are in the process of accepting resumes for a new **associational missionary** for Calvary Baptist Association. You may mail a resume to P.O. Box 1030, Judsonia, AR 72081 or email it to calvarybaptistassociation@gmail.com.

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

stu.min@glendalebc.org.

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

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

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

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

South Main Baptist Church, Crossett, is seeking a **bi-vocational youth pastor**. Send resume to: smbcsecretary@windstream.net or PO Box 430, Crossett, AR 71635.

Farmington First is seeking a **full-time student minister** for established youth ministry. Looking for someone to take students deeper in the faith and equip them to reach others. Experience and a theology degree preferred but not required. Send resume to personnel@farmingtonfirst.com.

Perryville FBC is seeking a **bi-voca-**

tional music director. Send resumes to pvfb.church@gmail.com.

MISCELLANEOUS

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Two **cemetery plots** for sale at Chapel Hill Cemetery in Jacksonville. \$1000 each. Call 501-257-0126.

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Sacred Heart of Mary, Barling, AR, is going to get new **pews**. If anyone knows of a church or any organization that can use them, contact Tony Meeks, 479-755-7337. Benches are free; just help remove and load in your trailer on March 3 at 9 am.

arkansasbaptist.org/ads

FEBRUARY 17, 2019

Theologian Horace Bushnell once said, “Never think you could do something if only you had a different lot and sphere assigned to you. What you call hindrances, obstacles, discouragements, are probably God’s opportunities.” I have been guilty of creating and attending my own pity party. If God had only led me to a different place at a different time and removed all those hindrances, obstacles and problems, I could have done greater things. I realized the truth of Bushnell’s words. They are not my opportunities but God’s opportunities.

I imagine that Joseph didn’t see the animosity his brothers had for him – being thrown in a pit, sold into slavery, falsely accused of wrongdoing and thrown into prison – as fair. It really wasn’t about what is fair and what is not fair. Joseph responded with faithfulness to the opportunities he received. Through all the challenges, Joseph displayed godly character and discipline.

Pharaoh had a disturbing dream and sought Joseph to interpret it. Joseph explained that he could not interpret the

dream but God could. Regardless of the interpretation and its impact on him, Joseph relied on God and pointed to Him in the situation. The two dreams Pharaoh had about seven years of famine were dramatic revelations of what God was about to do. God giving Joseph the interpretation led Joseph to recognize God’s providential activity in the events that brought him to Pharaoh’s court to provide wise counsel.

Joseph probably had no idea he was going to be the wise man needed to help Pharaoh deal with the famine. Pharaoh said to

Joseph, “There is no one as intelligent and wise as you are” (Gen. 41:39). When God provides the opportunity, He also provides the wisdom to receive that opportunity.

Joseph’s opportunities were God’s opportunities. God would be honored through Joseph as he moved into the role of administrator. Just like God gave Joseph opportunities, God gives us opportunities to make a difference within His divine plan.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE**Opportunity knocks**

GENESIS 41:15-21, 33-40 (HCSB)

I love going to the Sight and Sound Theatre in Branson, Mo. One of my favorite shows is “Joseph.” One of the best parts of the production is the reunion of Joseph with his brothers. This reunion in the story shows that forgiveness and reconciliation are possible for those who are open to God’s transforming power in their lives.

After several encounters, Joseph revealed his identity to his brothers. It was a very emotional reveal. Joseph wept so loud that everyone outside heard him. Joseph, with crying words, said, “I am Joseph! Is my father still living?” (Gen. 45:3). At first, they were fearful. Perhaps they thought about what they had done to him and the fact that Joseph was second-in-command in Egypt. Joseph told them again, “I am Joseph, your brother, the one you sold into Egypt” (Gen. 45:4). I think he said this to verify his identity to them, but this statement probably didn’t relieve the brothers’ fear.

Joseph continued to explain to them;

as he did, he shows us his godly character and wisdom about God’s providential activity in the life of His people. Joseph told them, “God sent me ahead of you to preserve life” (Gen. 45:5). Think about it. The brothers threw Joseph in a pit and then sold him into slavery. All but Reuben wanted to kill him. Joseph was literally saying this was part of God’s plan. He explained further, “God sent me ahead of you to establish you as a remnant within the land and to keep you alive by a great deliverance” (Gen. 45:7).

Joseph arranged for his brothers and his father, Jacob, to reunite and settle in the land of Egypt under Joseph’s protection. That’s divine irony. “Joseph kissed each of his brothers as he wept, and afterward his brothers talked with him” (Gen. 45:15). They had plenty to catch up on.

As Christ-followers, we should have an attitude of forgiveness and mercy and seek reconciliation even if we are the ones offended.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE**Reunited**

GENESIS 45:1-15 (HCSB)

We love our stuff. Have you ever felt just a little guilty when you pass some panhandlers on the street corners on your way to take another load of stuff to your storage unit – another load of stuff that will eventually find its way to a yard sale or be auctioned off?

The average home has tripled in size over the past 50 years, and 10 percent of us still have to rent storage units to hold our accumulations of stuff. We place more emphasis on stuff instead of people. There is nothing wrong with possessions, but we need to have the right attitude and perspective about them.

The Apostle John asked an interesting question, “If anyone has this world’s goods and sees his brother in need but closes his eyes to his need – how can God’s love reside in him?” (1 John 3:17). There is a modern axiom that says, “Talk is cheap.” This is exactly what James meant, “If a brother or sister is without clothes and lacks daily food and one of

you says to them, ‘Go in peace, keep warm, and eat well,’ but you don’t give them what the body needs, what good is it?” (James 2:15-16).

Materialism can consume you. Daniel Akin, president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., said, “The objects of our affections need to be rightly ordered if we are truly to find ultimate and lasting satisfaction.” John commands us to “not love the world or the things that belong to the world” (1 John 2:15). Why? To love the world is not to love God the Father (1 John 2:15).

Our love for others flows out of our love relationship with our heavenly Father. When God’s love resides in our hearts, then our hearts will be open to others. Open hearts lead to open hands. That love will not just be in word only but in our actions while we use our possessions to meet the real needs of others. Loving and serving others always involves giving.

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE**When materialism consumes**

1 JOHN 2:12-17; 3:16-18 (HCSB)

FEBRUARY 24, 2019

I often hear this response when I share the gospel and witness for Christ, “That may be true for you, but not for me,” and “Who are you to impose your morality and religion on me?” We are living in a day when you can hardly voice a belief in anything. Ravi Zacharias said it this way, “Philosophically, you can believe anything, so long as you do not claim it to be true. Morally, you can practice anything, so long as you do not claim it is a better way. Religiously, you can hold to anything, so long as you do not bring Jesus Christ into it.”

There have always been people who oppose the gospel of Jesus Christ. We must resist error and embrace the truth of God as revealed by the Holy Spirit and the Holy Scriptures.

The word “antichrist” means “against Christ” or “in place of Christ.” In this book, antichrists are the enemies of Christ. These antichrists are already here

(1 John 2:18). These are not the same person as the antichrist who will come on the scene at the end of the age. John described these antichrists as liars who deny “that Jesus is the Messiah” (1 John 2:22). They always attempt to diminish the work of Christ.

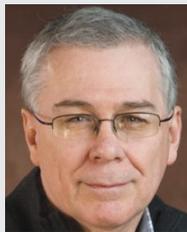
These antichrists have abandoned the Church of Jesus Christ (1 John 2:19). They are false teachers who deny the faith (1 John 2:22-23). John wrote, “No one who denies the Son can have the Father” (1 John 2:23).

The good news is, “He who confesses the Son has the Father as well” (1 John 2:23). We should not let these antichrists, false teachers, discourage us. We must hold fast to the authority of the Word of God (1 John 2:24-26). We need to remain in Him, be bold and not ashamed, and do what is right (1 John 2:27-29). If you do, you will give evidence that you have been born of Him (1 John 2:29).

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE**When false religions deceive**

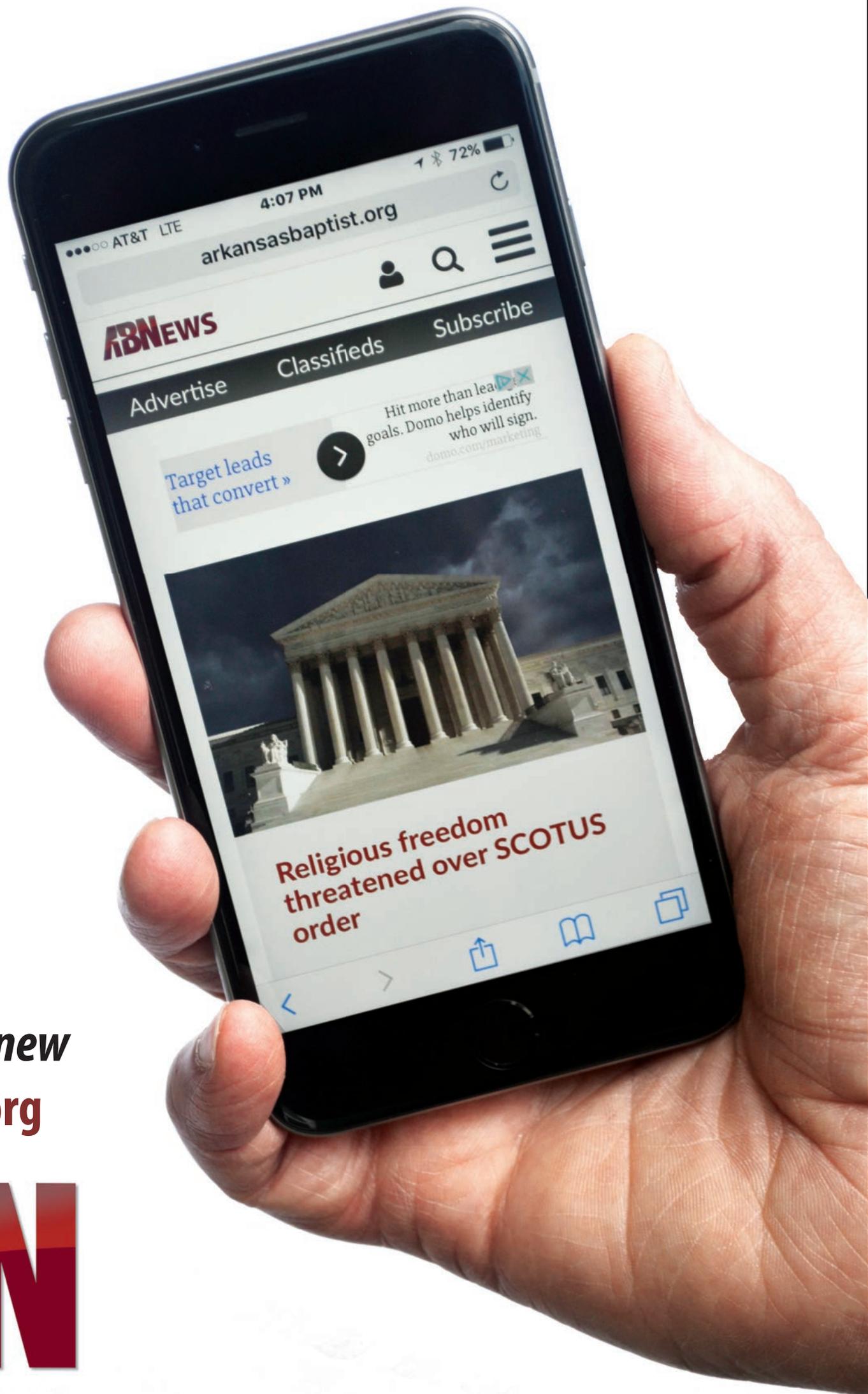
1 JOHN 2:18-29 (HCSB)

Featured commentary writer



Gerald Nash

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



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