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States challenge Roe v. Wade with strict abortion laws

Caleb Yarbrough
Arkansas Baptist News

COULD legal abortion soon be a thing of the past?

Forty-six years ago the U.S. Supreme Court federally legalized abortion with its decision in the case of Roe v. Wade. The decision sparked a polarizing national debate that continues today.

On Jan. 22 New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo signed into law the Reproductive Health Act (RHA), which legalized late-term abortions in New York. The law allows midwives and physician assistants to conduct abortions, and it removes all possible criminal penalties for abortionists, according to *Arkansas Baptist News* reports.

At the time it was passed, pundits argued that the RHA was a preemptive strike aimed at strengthening New York's state laws concerning abortion - in light of recently appointed Supreme Court justices who would likely be sympathetic to the possibility of overturning Roe v. Wade if a new case were to merit such a precedent.

In recent days states across the Midwest and South have been forwarding their own bills concerning abortion rights. Unlike in New York, the measures aim to severely limit abortion instead of expand its existing scope. In most cases, supportive state legislators and executives un-

derstand that such bills will likely be challenged, which they hope could take their laws to the nation's Supreme Court - providing precedent for overturning Roe v. Wade.

At an April 11 press conference in which he signed his state's "heartbeat" bill - a bill that limits abortions following the detection of a fetal heartbeat, or at about six weeks of pregnancy - into law, Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine said, "The purpose of the bill is really to have a vehicle for the U.S. Supreme Court, so that should it be ready to do so, it could revisit some of its prior rulings."

While it is no easy task to overturn a long-standing Supreme Court decision, as recently as May 13 the high court cited a 1992 decision that upheld Roe v. Wade during the process of overturning a 1979 precedent in an unrelated case, Reuters reported.

For a Supreme Court precedent to be overruled, a majority of the justices must agree that overturning the court's prior decision is warranted based on the previous precedent being incorrectly decided, according to Reuters.

Justice Stephen Breyer dissented to the court's 5-4 decision on May 13 to overturn a 1979 precedent, writing, "Today's decision can only cause one to wonder which cases the

NEWS ANALYSIS

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An artist rendering by Southland Gaming & Racing shows a planned \$250 million addition in West Memphis. The addition will include a casino and hotel complex. The Quapaw Nation plans to build a \$240 million casino in Pine Bluff.

Gambling on the future:

Ark. Baptists respond to gaming

Margaret Colson
Arkansas Baptist News

ARE ARKANSANS gambling on the future? How can Arkansas Baptists respond?

In the six months since approval of Issue 4 (Amendment 100), which legalized casinos in four Arkansas counties, casino operators have moved forward with casino licensing applications and plans. At the same time, many Arkansas Baptists have continued to consider possible next steps in opposition to casinos in their communities, as well as best ways to minister if casinos do become part of their local community landscape.

The amendment, passed by a margin of 54 to 46 percent, allows for one casino license each to be awarded in Pope and Jefferson counties, which currently have no legal gambling operations, as well as casino licenses to be awarded to Oaklawn Racing Casino Resort in Hot Springs and South-

land Gaming and Racing in West Memphis.

The casino license application period for those seeking to build a casino in Pope and Jefferson counties began May 1 and concludes May 30.

Jefferson County

In the November 2018 election, Jefferson County voters approved Issue 4 by a vote of 64.5 to 35.5 percent, according to the Arkansas Secretary of State office. Ken Thornton, pastor of First Baptist Church, Pine Bluff, explained, "I believe the casino approved in Pine Bluff occurred out of an economic desperation in our community."

The Quapaw Nation submitted an application, along with a \$250,000 check, to the Arkansas Racing Commission office May 1, making the Quapaw Nation first in line to apply for one of the state's two new casino licenses. The Quapaw Nation is seeking to build the Saracen Casino Resort, a

\$240 million casino project near The Pines mall in Pine Bluff, in Jefferson County, the *Arkansas Democrat Gazette* reported May 2.

The casino, Thornton believes, will attract primarily local residents and will contribute to a "creeping economic blight as a result of wages lost to gambling instead of going toward food, shelter, medical care and other life necessities."

Many other community ills, including "rising crime rates and more pawn shops" as well as "more burglary and aggravated robberies" and "increased spousal and child abuse," will also result from legalized gambling, he said.

"I hope this is not true, but this is the history of legalized gambling."

The Quapaw Nation proposal has been endorsed by Pine Bluff Mayor Shirley Washington and Jefferson

See **CASINOS** page 6

ABN classifieds get results!

Read them on Page 10.

The ABN classifieds are a great way to advertise for your church, ministry or business. You can now submit a classified ad via the ABN website at arkansasbaptist.org/ads

Classifieds

WANTED
A person to help with...
WANTED
A person to help with...
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A person to help with...

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 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

ABSC CP budget approved for 2020

LITTLE ROCK – The 2020 Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC) unified Cooperative Program (CP) budget of \$21 million was approved unanimously by the ABSC Finance Committee May 14.

The 2020 budget is the third year of a new five-year budget formula approved by messengers in 2016, which increases the amount of CP dollars sent out of state to Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) causes from 43.77 percent to 45.82 percent by 2022. The 2020 budget increases the convention's percentage to 45.42 percent.

The increase in the amount of CP funds sent out of state includes 1.05 percent from ABSC Executive Board ministries, with the remainder coming from ABSC institutions and agencies for a total of 2.05 percent. The increase from the institutions and agencies amounts to a .2 percent increase to the SBC each year of the five-year budget formula period.

The percentage of what ABSC calls Out-of-State Missions is 2.58 percent for a total of 48 percent in 2020, projected to grow to 48.40 percent in 2022 under the new five-year formula.

The Out-of-State Missions percentage includes funds allocated to ABSC to connect churches to SBC strategies, CP promotion and administration and the SBC Executive Committee. The SBC budget allocation from ABSC totals \$9,538,200.

ABSC programs and related entity budget allocations for 2020 are \$11,461,800 – which is 54.58 percent of the total CP budget. (For individual agency allocations, see related table on this page.)

Has your church made improvements?

LITTLE ROCK – It's that time of year again!

The *Arkansas Baptist News* (ABN) will publish its second of four planned Church Building and Facilities editions June 6 and needs submissions from you about building, updates and improvements that your church may have undergone recently or are planning in the upcoming near future.

Not all churches can an-

2020 Unified Cooperative Program Budget			
Designated Area		2020 Budget	% of Budget
Arkansas Baptist State Convention	Executive Board Programs	\$6,264,031	29.83%
	Camp Siloam	\$238,136	1.13%
	Children's Homes and Family Ministries	\$548,299	2.61%
	Arkansas Baptist Foundation	\$320,967	1.53%
	Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine	\$214,521	1.02%
	Christian Higher Education	\$3,875,846	18.46%
	<i>Ouachita Baptist University</i>	\$2,969,227	14.14%
	<i>Williams Baptist College</i>	\$906,619	4.32%
	TOTAL: ARKANSAS BAPTIST STATE CONVENTION	\$11,461,800	54.58%
Southern Baptist Convention	International Mission Board	\$4,808,207	22.90%
	North American Mission Board	\$2,173,756	10.35%
	Theological Education Ministries	\$2,113,665	10.07%
	Christian Ethics & Religious Liberty Ministries	\$157,380	0.75%
	Facilitating Ministries (SBC Exec. Comm. Expenses)	\$285,192	1.36%
	TOTAL: SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION	\$9,538,200	45.42%
Total Budget	TOTAL: UNIFIED COOPERATIVE PROGRAM BUDGET		
		2020 CP 45.42% Out of State 2.58% Total Out of State 48.00%	2022 CP 45.82% Out of State 2.58% Total Out of State 48.40%
		\$21,000,000	100.00%

* Source: Arkansas Baptist State Convention

CP funds received in excess of the annual budgeted amount will be split 50/50 between the International Mission Board and ABSC at the end of the fiscal year and distributed to each state entity based on the established budget formula. (Visit arkansasbaptist.org/agencybudgets2020 to view or download agency budgets.)

The Finance Committee recommendation will be voted on by the ABSC Executive Board on Aug. 9, before being sent to messengers for consideration at the state convention annual meeting Oct. 22-23 at Geyer Springs First Baptist Church, Little Rock.

The budget moves the ABSC closer to achieving a historic 50/50 split in the portion of its CP receipts given to SBC missions and ministries versus what it

keeps in the state.

Additional reports

In other reports, members of the Finance Committee:

– Heard from J.D. "Sonny" Tucker, ABSC executive director, who told the committee their work is a "holy trust," with the ABSC Executive Board and convention agencies accountable to them.

"(W)e come to do this because it is a holy trust, not a rubber-stamp meeting today. This is not perfunctory," said Tucker. "Your agencies and institutions – the children's home, the foundation, *Arkansas Baptist News*, Camp Siloam, Ouachita and Williams – are also accountable and responsible to the individuals and churches who give money, and they also are a part of this holy trust."

Tucker added, "So, it's all about missions what we're here to do. Let's make that the focus of who we are and understand that we are a missions organization. Let's celebrate what we do."

– Heard "team impact" stories from Andrea Lennon, ABSC women's ministry specialist, about increased participation of Baptist women in leadership events and the Inspire women's conference, and from Greg Addison, ABSC associate executive director, who gave an update on convention

efforts to educate churches on preventing sex abuse. Addison said over the past several years more than 1,000 Arkansas Baptists have been trained, representing 300 churches.

– Heard a Terminated Pastor/Staff Assistance Committee report from Dubs Byers, pastor of First Baptist Church, Dumas. Byers said from May 1, 2018, through April 30, 2019, nine ministers received one-time assistance totaling \$22,800, and two ministers received assistance of up to four months in the amount of \$1,208.62, for a total amount of assistance provided of \$24,008.62.

Program Committee meets

Also May 14, the ABSC Program Committee met to hear an overview of 2018 Executive Board team goals and outcomes and to approve 2020 Executive Board team goals and strategies. (Visit arkansasbaptist.org/absc2020reports to view or download team reports.)

During the two committee meetings, Tucker led discussion groups comprised of committee members to address the following topics: 1) How can we get the message to our churches about the ministries of the ABSC? 2) Preventing sex abuse in our churches and 3) The deacon's role in evangelism and church health.

McKinney, Floyd talk creativity and theology in worship

WORSHIP. It's what Arkansas Baptists do every Sunday morning. But, what exactly is worship? How do theology and worship go hand in hand? What role does creativity play in worship services?

David McKinney, worship pastor of Cross Church in northwest Arkansas, in a wide-ranging interview in two *Arkansas Baptist News* podcasts with host Bill Bumpas, answered these and other questions.

"Worship is a response to Who God is - the truth of Who God is," McKinney said. Drawing on Isaiah 6, which is a "microcosm of how to worship God," McKinney explained that worship consists of at least three elements: wow, woe and response. In that particular passage, Isaiah first expressed, "Wow," at God's holiness and glory; he then expressed, "Woe," at his own sinfulness, and he finally expressed his personal response, "Send me."

In a separate interview, Ronnie Floyd, newly elected president and CEO of The Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee and longtime pastor of Cross Church in northwest Arkansas, defined worship simply.

"Worship is loving God from the inside out," he said, explaining that worship occurs both privately and publicly. "Through personal devotion to Christ daily, we experience the worship of God. Through public worship, we express our public commitment to God," he said.

In many scriptural passages, "God commands us to sing. He tells us to shout and clap and kneel and bow. He commands us to praise Him with instruments; He commands us to praise Him with our voice," McKinney said.

Worship services, which include many elements such as music and singing, offering, preaching, prayer, and even announcements, should be looked at holistically, McKinney believes.

"It is incumbent on us as the worship pastor to learn to take every aspect of that service to point our people to, 'Hey, we're responding to the truth of Who God is,'" he said.

McKinney said that he often sits down to discuss upcoming sermon series and worship services with Nick Floyd, newly elected senior pastor of Cross Church.

"You think you're the worship pastor, but in reality the

senior pastor of your church is the worship pastor. He's the worship leader. And if he's not leading both by example and in vision, it's very hard to set any course for the church," he said.

Ronnie Floyd affirmed the partnership of the senior pastor and worship pastor in planning worship services. "There needs to be a give-and-take exchange as both navigate the will of the Lord weekly. I think the most powerful expression of partnership occurs through thematic worship planning built from the Word of God that the pastor will preach on the Sunday to come," he said.

Realizing that some worship pastors do not have opportunity to meet with their senior pastors to discuss worship services, McKinney said, "Pray that God would give your senior pastor a vision for worship and what it means and that God would give him a heart for worship."

Worship services throughout Arkansas are as unique as the congregations in which they take place. Worship leaders, McKinney said, should "know the culture" of their congregations and be creative within that congregational culture as they plan worship services, he said.

"God is the ultimate Cre-



ator. He is a creative God, and we should worship Him creatively," McKinney said.

Ronnie Floyd emphasized, "The Bible is the basis of it all. Jesus is the center of it all. The Holy Spirit should lead us through it all. Humility before God is imperative. Surrender to Jesus is absolute and irrevocable."

In planning worship services, worship pastors should ask, McKinney said. "What's the theology behind what we are leading our people to sing? The worship pastor should be just as much a theologian

as the senior pastors in our churches because the people don't go away singing the pastor's sermon points, but they do go away singing the songs that we are presenting to them.

"Don't be afraid of the theological depth of some of these concepts, but allow the Lord to teach you what it means to be the proclaimer of these theological truths and allow the Holy Spirit to work in you in that way," he said.

To listen to the podcasts in their entirety, visit arkansasbaptist.org/podcast.

ABORTION

continued from page one

court will overrule next."

On May 16 Alabama Gov.

Kay Ivey signed into law the strictest abortion legislation in the country.

Alabama's new law makes all abortions, other than those done to save the life of the

mother, illegal. In addition, the bill makes performing an abortion a felony punishable by up to 99 years in prison, according to the *Montgomery Advertiser*. The law does not include exceptions for victims of rape or incest.

Heartbeat laws have recently been passed in multiple states, including Georgia, Mississippi and Kentucky. Similar legislation is also being considered by South Carolina and Louisiana, according to *USA Today*. However, legal challenges to each of the laws, presented by organizations such as the American Civil Liberties Union, could keep the legislation from seeing the light of day.

North Dakota passed the first heartbeat bill in the country in 2013. The law was later overturned in federal court. Similar laws passed in Arkansas and Kentucky were also ruled unconstitutional.

A bill that would categorize abortion as a criminal offense punishable by a sentence as harsh as the death penalty was recently presented to the Texas legislature, the *Dallas Morning News* reported.

Jack Graham, senior pastor of Prestonwood Baptist Church in Plano, Texas, and former president of the Southern Baptist Convention, spoke out against the Abolish Abortion in Texas Act in a May 11 article in the *Morning News*.

"I have always stood, and will always stand, for the unborn, but this bill was a bridge too far. I believe it would have caused irreparable harm to the pro-life cause, but more importantly, it does not take into account the sincere struggle many women undergo when they are faced with an unplanned pregnancy. This was not the right approach to end abortion in America,"

wrote Graham.

Graham affirms heartbeat laws passed by other states, as well as those that would force doctors to treat babies who survive abortions or face a felony charge.

Citing that more than 90 percent of the mothers who have come through Prestonwood Baptist's clinic since 1991 have chosen life - equating to more than 45,000 babies - Graham argues that, for Christians, the ultimate goal must be to care for mothers as much as for the unborn.

"Our focus should be on protecting the precious lives of unborn babies and supporting mothers who find themselves in a difficult situation. Both lives - mother and child - are inherently worthy and infinitely precious in the eyes of God," wrote Graham.

Contact Caleb Yarbrough at caleb@arkansasbaptist.org.



Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey signs the Alabama Human Life Protection Act into law May 16. *Alabama Office of the Governor photo*

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)

A distracted life can be dangerous

Recently, while returning to the *Arkansas Baptist News* office from downtown Little Rock, I witnessed a violent accident along Interstate 630.

A small SUV just ahead of me swerved ever so slightly to the left, resulting in the vehicle clipping a large concrete barrier placed along the road during construction.

The vehicle flipped two to three times, coming to rest in the center of the roadway.



Pressing On

Tim Yarbrough

Phil. 3:14

I don't know what caused the driver to lose control of the vehicle and ultimately crash, but it was evident that the driver did not exercise enough attention while traveling close to the concrete wall along the congested stretch of roadway. A slight swerve to the left sent the vehicle sailing uncontrollably.

Nearly every day during my commute I see the same behavior, though thankfully it doesn't usually result in a

violent crash. People in their vehicles are talking and texting on cellphones, in a hurry weaving in and out of traffic and cutting other motorists off – generally not exhibiting prudent behavior required by civilized society.

I believe what I see during my commute is a microcosm of what is happening in our society as a whole.

I grew up during a time

when people along the roadway were more considerate of one another.

In fact,

where I'm from, you couldn't get from one destination to another without someone waving at you. A wave from a friend or a stranger could come from a motorist in another vehicle or from someone along the roadside.

Granted, when I first took the wheel as a teenager, I resided in a rural area of Missouri, where a lot of folks knew each other. In southeast Missouri, where we lived on a farm and the nearest town

had a population of 496, practically everyone – whether I knew them or not – waved at me when I passed.

A few weeks ago, I undertook an unscientific experiment when driving along a two-lane stretch of road near Little Rock.

I intentionally waved at motorists passing me and a few others standing along the roadside, noting their responses.

Not one person waved back, but I did get several curious stares, kind of like they were saying, "Do I know you?" or "Why are you waving at me?"

As I drove on Interstate 430 in the center lane one morning, a young woman began

to merge onto the interstate from my right, coming from the Shackleford/Chenal area.

Unexpectedly, the woman's vehicle, merging left from the far right lane, nearly crashed into me when she – apparently – expected me to relinquish my lane so she could get around a large school bus occupying her lane.

In the congestion of early morning traffic that would have been a dangerous maneuver for me to make, so I simply stayed in my lane, slowing a bit.

To my surprise, the woman honked at me for not moving out of the center lane, then accelerated and sped hastily around me.

As much as humans may

try, they simply cannot captain their own ships without God's guidance.

That's why God tells us to be considerate of others (Phil. 2:4) and to seek the good of our neighbor (1 Cor. 10:24).

In our fast-paced world, it is easy to get caught up in distractions and annoyances along the roadway – losing sight of our purpose in life of loving and worshipping our Lord (Matt. 22:37).

My commute is a reminder that I need to be careful to slow down and stay focused on the prize of the high calling of Jesus Christ (Phil. 3:14).

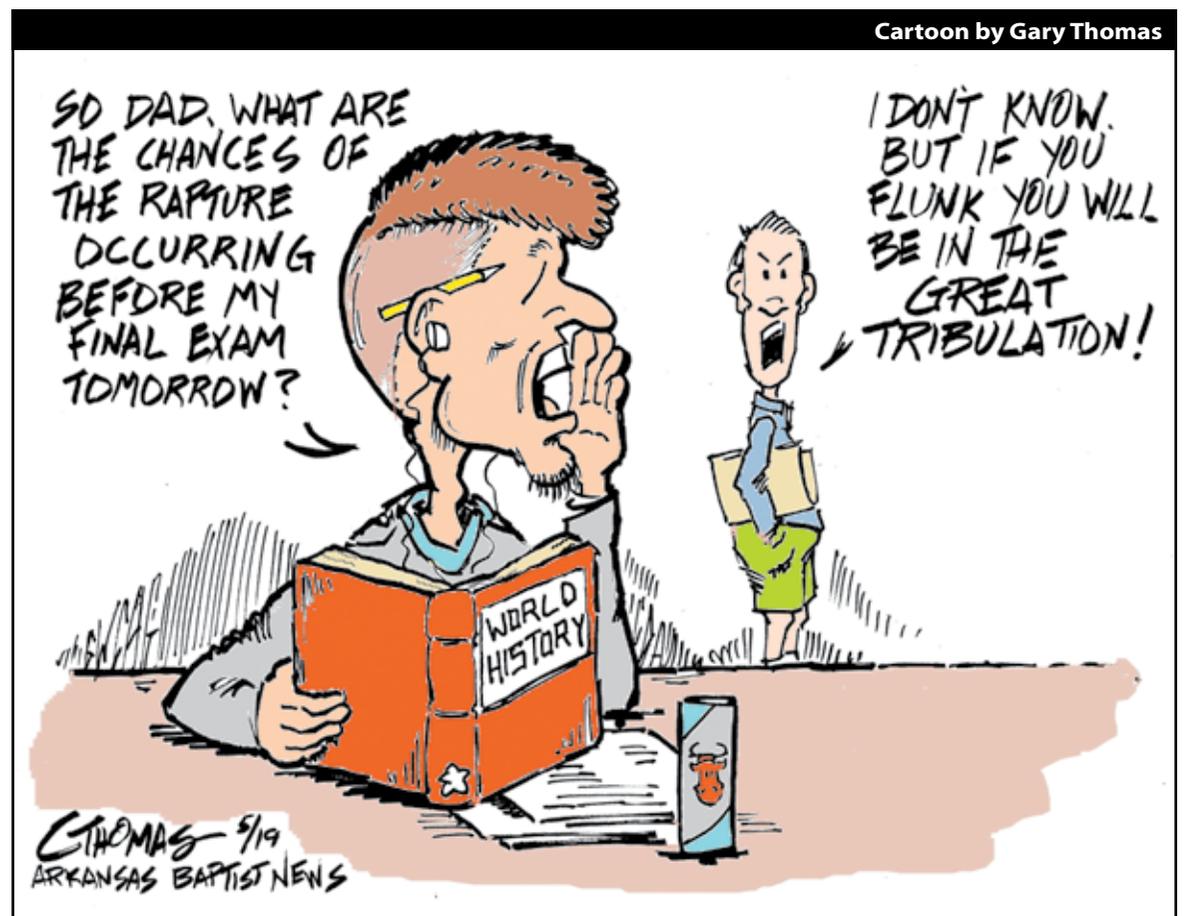
Tim Yarbrough is the editor/executive director of the *Arkansas Baptist News*.

The purpose and mission of the Arkansas Baptist News

The *Arkansas Baptist News (ABN)* exists to assist Kingdom work by informing, inspiring and involving Arkansas Baptists through meeting needs of people, spreading the gospel, making disciples and growing God's work in Arkansas and beyond.

As the largest religious publication in the state, the *ABN* strives for journalistic integrity, fairness and balance in its reporting of Baptist and evangelical news.

We advocate for the cause of Jesus Christ.
We report the news based on our Christian worldview.
We uphold high standards of journalism and Christian ethics.



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The historical Jesus - Part 4

In the last several articles, I have focused on the historical evidence for the resurrection of Jesus. These evidences include the existence of Jesus, His death and burial. In this column, I'd like to focus on the empty tomb.

One of the historical facts that is generally agreed upon in ancient Near Eastern studies is that Jesus' tomb was empty three days after His crucifixion. Gary Habermas writes, "In recent years, an increasing number of critical theologians. ...



Deep Waters

Chad Meeks

..... have recognized the evidence for the empty tomb and even the historicity of it. To be sure, an empty tomb does not guarantee a resurrection, but

it does serve as a pointer to such an event." This isn't to say that all scholars agree on this point, but there is significant agreement.

But why would scholars generally agree that Jesus' tomb was found empty three days after the crucifixion? The primary reason is that some of the oldest attestations we have of the death of Christ note the empty tomb. One of these testaments was written by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:3-4, ESV: "For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures." The way this passage is written indicates that it is a Christian saying that was in use before Paul, thus indicating that the empty tomb was a very early belief among Christians.

Another reason the empty tomb is generally agreed upon is the testimony of the women who found it. The fact that women were the ones who found the empty tomb is significant. If the disciples were embellishing the story or making it up, they would not have used the testimony of women. A testimony from a female (or multiple females) would have been ineffective and counterproductive at this time. As strange as it may sound, such evidence gives credence to the account.

Another significant point in defending the empty tomb is that a counter-explanation was immediately developed. In Matthew 28, the religious leaders told the guards to say that Jesus' body was stolen. In fact, this theory is still around today. It is generally called (aptly so) the Stolen Body Theory.

Why isn't this a good explanation for the empty tomb? First, it is unlikely that the guards fell asleep while the body was stolen. These trained soldiers could have been severely punished if they were asleep on duty. Second, it seems unlikely that the disciples could have moved the stone and taken the body while the guards slept. It seems improbable that the untrained disciples of Christ could have defeated temple guards, especially without anyone being hurt or killed. Third, as will be discussed in the next piece, there were postmortem appearances of Christ. How did the disciples get someone who looked like Jesus to claim to be the resurrected Christ?

Given the reasonableness of the claim and the improbability of the counters, it seems safe to assume that the tomb of Jesus was indeed empty three days after His crucifixion.

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

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 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.

Provoking one another

By the time you read this, my oldest will have officially graduated from high school. Many changes will follow this milestone. In the immediate, though, the focus is on thriving in the transition. That includes encouraging my daughter to find a good rhythm and routine for the summer. She's a bit like me. When we don't have a routine, time escapes us, and we end up feeling lethargic and unfulfilled. Even in the midst of a busy summer, structure is life-giving. So, my job is to motivate and help her find the rhythm, temporary though it may be, that will keep her mentally, emotionally, spiritually and physically healthy through this transition time.



Uncovered Dish

Ann Hibbard

10:24-25 (CSB): "And let us watch out for one another to provoke love and good works, not neglecting to gather together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging each other, and all the more as you see the day approaching."

I love the word "provoke" used in this translation. We often think of provoking as a negative thing. But here it's very, very positive. I also love the NASB's use of "stimulate" or the NIV's choice of "spur...on." ESV and NKJV use "stir up." Whatever the translation, it is undeniable that this is a call to be active.

In the context of our family's life right now, I can't expect that, simply through my presence, my daughter will randomly catch the thought that it's good for her to be intentional in these precious last weeks at home. I need to actively and lovingly motivate her to love and good works.

It cannot be any different with my church family. All too often, we expect one another to have the rhythm

of the Christian life figured out before we gather together. That's not what Scripture tells us. On the contrary, Scripture clearly shows that we are to gather together for the purpose of motivating and equipping one another! We are commanded to "watch out for one another," that we may genuinely recognize each other's ups and downs, floundering and successes. With those relationships established, we then have a foundation from which to provoke one another positively - not in the negative, harping sense we tend toward, but in a nourishing, motivating way.

I need that community, that accountability, that loving stimulation from fellow believers. To that end, I pray that our churches will become filled with believers who actively seek to "watch out for one another to provoke love and good works." And I commit to taking action to be that type of church member myself.

Will you join me?

Ann Hibbard is a member of East End Baptist Church in East End. Read her blog at annhibbard.com.

'Mission trips' can be meaningless

Over the past four decades, the term "mission trip" has grown exponentially in use, while the definition has become increasingly broad.

In biblical Christianity, the "mission of God" is to bring glory to Himself. The "mission of the Church," given by Jesus Christ to His followers, is to make disciples among all people groups.

As the apostles lived out this mission, they proclaimed the gospel; people believed the gospel; believers gathered (Church); leaders were trained, and the process was repeated. The product of the mission is gathering eternal worshippers. The purpose of the mission is to glorify God. Sadly, in today's 21st century American Church, there are too many mission trips with misdirected goals and no

product.

Now, it should be understood, people cannot draw anyone to faith in Christ; only God can. In the same way, people have no capacity to glorify God apart from Jesus Christ. But, God, in His all-knowing wisdom, involves



Answering the Call

Eric Ramsey

the redeemed in His mission and has given a missional mandate to the Church.

Therefore, the Church should rightfully live out the mission according to His direction and purpose and be careful about how a mission trip is defined and conducted.

Here are just a few things to consider:

1) A mission trip should always be "gospel-centric." The gospel should be lived out, clearly communicated in a way that it is understandable by those hearing it, and a primary part of any mission trip.

So, whatever we are doing - whether feeding the hungry, repairing a home or church building, working with children, serving at an orphanage, conducting a medical clinic or leading a conference - it is not a mission trip unless the communication of the gospel is a primary function.

2) A mission trip should always be part of a church planting strategy. This is not to say that every mission project team needs to be planting a church; but, every project should be a tactical part of a plan to plant churches. This is the New Testament way. Every missionary journey was part of a church planting plan, and it should be that way today. It is irresponsible to have a plan to evangelize without a plan to congregationalize. Someone might ask, "But, what if it is a block party to help strengthen an existing

Beals of LR Nine presents lecture at Ouachita

ARKADELPHIA – Melba Pattillo Beals spoke on equality, faith and her experience integrating into Little Rock Central High School as a member of the Little Rock Nine April 2 as a part of Ouachita Baptist University's Birkett Williams Lecture Series.

Beals is a recipient of the Congressional Gold Medal.

"Equality is voice, choice and inclusion," Beals said. "I got a voice in what goes on around me or whatever I choose to participate in; I have a choice to drink out of the water fountain, where I'm going to live, what car I'm going to drive, what school I'm going to attend; and I'm going to be included if I want to be

included. I cannot be excluded for something like the shape of my body, the color of my hair, my eyes, how I speak or what I eat. Voice, choice and inclusion – that's something I didn't have as a little girl in Little Rock, Ark., in 1941."

Beals was born and reared in Little Rock. She attended Horace Mann High School, an all-black school, until she realized that she wasn't receiving the same education as her white counterparts. When it was announced that Little Rock Central High School (LRCH) – which ranked 10th in the nation for education buildings at the time – would be integrating, Beals volunteered at age 14 to transfer to

the then all-white school.

Arriving to a mob surrounding the campus on her first day at LRCH, Beals said her life changed forever.

"What I learned the first day was they were willing to kill me to keep me from coming," she said.

While the Little Rock Nine later were guarded by the U.S. 101st Airborne as they would enter the school, Beals spoke about the harassment she experienced at the hands of her peers and the Ku Klux Klan. She eventually was forced to leave Little Rock because of a \$10,000 reward for her death.

Recalling a conversation she had with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Beals repeated the

words King spoke to her after she shared with him about her suffering: "He said to me, 'Melba, don't be selfish. You are doing this for generations yet unborn.'

"And I didn't understand that," she continued. "But later in the year, I realized I wasn't doing this for me."

Beals claims that her faith in God is the only thing that got her through these difficult times.

"I got through this by my grandmother, my mother and my father telling me that I was a child of God," she said, "that God was going to take care of me, and that all of this would be resolved, not in my time, but in God's time."

Beals has written and published two books about her experiences: "Warriors Don't Cry" and "I Will Not Fear," a new book about the role of faith in her life.

CASINOS

continued from page one

County's Judge Gerald Robinson, the *Democrat-Gazette* reported. Amendment 100 requires such endorsements.

Pope County

In Pope County, where the casino amendment was opposed by a margin of 60 to 40 percent, according to the Arkansas Secretary of State office, prospects of a casino license being issued may be in doubt. In December 2018, then-Pope County Judge Jim Ed Gibson and then-Russellville Mayor Randy Horton pledged support for a proposed multimillion-dollar casino complex in Pope County, the *Arkansas Baptist News* (ABN) reported in January 2019. Because neither Gibson nor Horton are currently serving in elected positions, their letters of endorsement were deemed invalid after the February 2019 approval of Arkansas Casino Gaming Rules, which require that endorsements come only from current officials and only at the time a casino application is submitted.

Pope County Judge Ben Cross and Russellville Mayor Richard Harris have indicated they do not plan to issue casino endorsements, particularly without voters' consent. Pope County voters also passed a local ordinance by a nearly 70 percent margin that requires an election to allow a casino to

be built in the area.

Despite opposition, casino operators continue to express interest for a casino license to be issued in Pope County. Cross states that he has been approached by at least four parties interested in building a casino in Pope County, KATV reported in December 2018.

Cross told the *Democrat-Gazette* that he believes "the application period will come and go without a license being issued" and that he thinks the issue will become an issue of the court. At press time, no license applications have been filed.

Arkansas Baptists respond

Greg Sykes, pastor of First Baptist Church, Russellville, and president of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC), agrees.

Sykes said, "We do know that the casinos are proceeding as if they are a certainty – they are simply trying to determine how they can financially induce the county and cities into an arrangement – so it feels as if we're being raffled off to the highest bidder. We know there are numerous meetings being held behind closed doors and lots of promises being exchanged. But, based upon the conflict between the state amendment and local initiative and the will of the local voters, it sure looks like a lawsuit, in some shape or form, is likely."

He encourages "Arkansas Baptists in Pope County to continue to contact their local elected officials and ask

them to honor the will of the local voters and the local initiative."

Jim Knight, who leads Citizens For A Local Choice in Pope County, seems more certain regarding the potential of a casino being built in Pope County.

"We are stopping the casino in Pope County with a local ordinance," he said in written comments to the ABN.

In the 2018 annual meeting of the ABSC prior to the statewide ballot vote, Arkansas Baptists passed a resolution urging Arkansans to vote against Issue 4, thus "denying the gambling industry the opportunity to prey on the weakest, most vulnerable, and most desperate of our fellows Arkansans."

The resolution stated that, if Issue 4 were approved, Arkansas Baptists would "endeavor to restore and rehabilitate individuals caught up in the destructive cycle of problem gambling and will attempt to provide a safety net for the gamblers' families and communities as we are called to do as Christ-followers."

As casinos seem to be inching one step closer to being established in Arkansas, Thornton said, "Our local churches and other helping agencies will need to be prepared for more counseling and ministering to the increased needs of our community. We will look for ways to continue meeting the spiritual needs of our community that we love and are a part of."

Contact Margaret Colson at margaret@arkansasbaptist.org.



IN WITH THE NEW TURF – Ouachita Baptist University has finished installing artificial turf in the Cliff Harris Stadium. Tom Thrash of Thrash Law Firm in Little Rock donated \$800,000 for the university to install turf. The installation was completed in time for the first football game of the season against Harding University Sept. 5.

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Floyd names Upton assistant to EC president

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) – Ed Upton, 38, president of the Cross Church School of Ministry in northwest Arkansas since May 2017, has been named assistant to the president of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Executive Committee.

Ronnie Floyd, who assumed office as president/CEO of the SBC Executive Committee May 20 after leading Cross Church since 1986, made the announcement May 5.

Floyd said Upton, who also served as campus pastor for Cross Church's campus in Neosho, Mo., from 2015-2017, will help "forward and advance the vision, the values, the culture, and the priorities of the president to the Executive Committee staff team and members, as well as all of our partners in the Southern Baptist Convention" in the new role.

"Dr. Ed Upton loves the gospel and loves the Great Commission. He wants to

do all he can in his late 30s to help our convention be all we need to be today and in the future," Floyd said.

He added that Upton has excelled in leadership "by already investing in the generation around him and the generation behind him, building great leaders and teams of leaders."

"Dr. Upton walked near me when I served as president of the Southern Baptist Convention and, through his role as the president of our Cross Church School of Ministry, he has become highly connected with leaders in most of our SBC entities. Additionally, through his close work with me as president of the National Day of Prayer Task Force, he has also become highly connected with many evangelical leaders," said Floyd, who has led the task force since 2017.

"Dr. Upton has grown up under my ministry in northwest Arkansas," Floyd said. "He knows who I am, what I

am about, the culture I want to build and what is most important to me. Therefore, when I know I will need someone to help me forward and advance the vision, the values, the culture and the priorities that I want to establish in this role, I cannot think of anyone more prepared, more energetic and more committed to help me do this."

Upton, prior to his service at Cross Church, was minister to adults at Prestonwood Baptist Church's north campus in Prosper, Texas, from 2012-2015 and minister to single adults at Prestonwood's main campus in Plano, Texas, from 2010-2012.

In 2008-2009, he worked as special events project manager for Walmart's information systems division in Bentonville.

Upton earned doctor of ministry and master of divinity degrees from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., in 2014 and 2010,



Ed Upton, named assistant to the president of the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee, and his wife, Eleanor, have four children (from left): Ruth, Harrison and Benjamin and Mayleen (above right).

respectively, and an undergraduate degree in counseling from Freedom Bible College in Rogers in 2007.

Nick Floyd, who became Cross Church's senior pastor May 19, described Upton as "a proven leader. He understands

the SBC and knows what it takes to lead towards unity. I couldn't be more proud and happy as he joins my father in this new assignment."

Upton and his wife, Eleanor, have four children ranging in age from 5 to 18.

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MEANINGLESS

continued from page 5

church?” First of all, an influx of new believers does not necessarily strengthen an existing church. But, to answer the question, one of the marks of a strong and healthy church is that it reproduces itself.

When I am asked to help a church become healthier and stronger, I always ask why the church

wants to be healthier and stronger. The right answer is to glorify God and expand His kingdom. We glorify Him when we are about His mission to gather worshippers expanding His church – reproduction. So, church strengthening (for the right reason) is pressing toward a church planting strategy – or



should be.

3) A mission trip should never produce bragging rights or help us feel like better Christians. I am grieved when I hear mission team reports about “what we did.” They should always be about what God has done, what God is doing and what we pray He will do. Every mis-

sion team member should ask himself/herself, “What is God doing?” So, before you embark on your mission trip this summer, consider these questions: Is it His mission or yours? Is it your purpose or His? Done rightly, God will make an eternal impact in His kingdom and in you, most importantly, He will be glorified.

Eric W. Ramsey is associate pastor of First Baptist Church, Fort Smith.

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Leadership Profile for 2019 ABSC Nominating Committee

Members of the Nominating Committee for the 2019 Arkansas Baptist State Convention invite Arkansas Baptists to submit names of persons to that committee to consider when they bring the convention nominations for state committees and boards. This recommendation will not ensure nomination, but the committee will consider each recommendation. The committee will not contact any person recommended until they approve the nominations. The Nominating Committee will hold its first meeting in June and needs all recommendations no later than June 1. Members of the committee are: Paul White, chairman; Erby Burgess, Doug Falknor, Dave Hughey, Chris Johnson, Mark Roberts, Tad Rogers, Mac Stroud, and Wade Totty.

June 1 is the deadline for recommendations.

PLEASE PRINT

Nominee _____

Minister Layperson Occupation _____

Address _____

City _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Member of what church? _____

Association _____

Current leadership responsibilities

Professional _____

Civic _____

Church _____

Association _____

State or SBC Boards _____

Past leadership experience (within last five years)

State or SBC Boards _____

Association _____

Local Church _____

Personal

This person's greatest contributions, based on his or her past record, knowledge and experience, should be in the area of: _____

Is this person currently active in a local church? Yes No

Is this person able to be away from family and work for at least one or two days, three times a year? Yes No

On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rank this person's understanding of and commitment to the Cooperative Program? (Circle) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (10 being the highest rating)

Check the board or committee on which you believe this person could best serve.

Board of Trustees

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- Arkansas Baptist News*
- Baptist Memorial Health Care System, Inc., Memphis, Tenn.
- Camp Siloam
- Executive Board of the ABSC
- Ouachita Baptist University
- Williams Baptist University

Committees

- Constitution and Bylaws Committee
- Convention Program Committee

Print Name _____

(Name of person making recommendation)

Signature _____

Address _____

City _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

**MAIL THIS FORM TO: Connie McCall, c/o Executive Director's Office,
10 Remington Drive, Little Rock, AR 72204
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Gospel Games

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

2 Timothy 2:5 (CSB)

JONAH COLOR BY NUMBER

- 1- RED
- 2- ORANGE
- 3- YELLOW
- 4- GREEN
- 5- LIGHT BLUE
- 6- FLESH TONE



"Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights." Jonah 1:17

Across

- 1. "Whomsoever I shall ____, that...is he" (Matthew 26:48)
- 5. Paging device
- 7. "Let me go and ____ my vow" (2 Samuel 15:7)
- 8. Property claim
- 10. Fire
- 11. "one ____ destroyeth much good" (Ecclesiastes 9:18)
- 13. Admirer
- 14. Window part
- 15. Part of Chaldea (Ezekiel 23)
- 17. "And she coming in that ____ gave thanks" (Luke 2:38)
- 19. "But as many as received him, gave he ____" (John 1:12)
- 21. Artificial language

Down

- 22. Pronoun
- 23. City of Judah built by Benjamin's descendants (1 Chronicles 8)
- 24. East. state
- 25. "it is better for thee to ____ into life maimed" (Mark 9:43)
- 27. Insane
- 29. Below normal
- 30. "____ up the mighty men" (Joel 3:9)
- 31. Stadium sound
- 32. "____ of false prophets" (Matthew 7:15)
- 34. Banking (abbr.)
- 35. ____ of Solomon
- 36. Disciple of Paul (abbr.)
- 37. Idyllic
- 39. Theatre notices (abbr.)

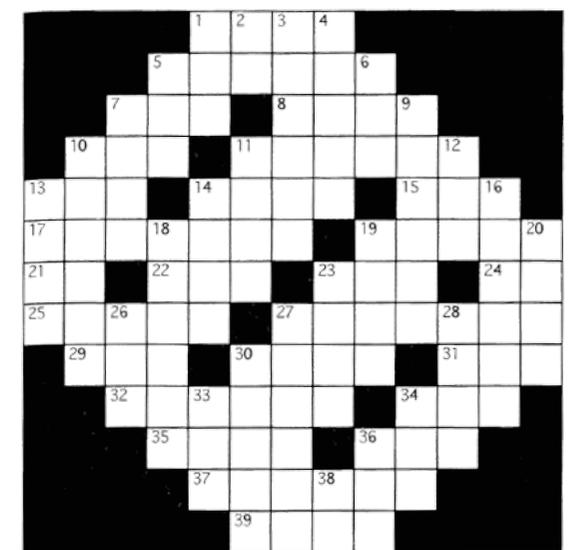
Down

- 1. "to him was given the ____ to the bottomless pit" (Revelation 9:1)
- 2. Common (Lat., abbr.)
- 3. To hold in place
- 4. River of northern France
- 5. Prohibit
- 6. New birth (abbr.)
- 7. "thou shalt make his ____ to receive his ashes" (Exodus 27:3)
- 9. Among the remnant of returning Levites (Ezra 2:48)
- 10. Basic principles
- 11. Without (Fr.)
- 12. Tiff
- 13. "gold tried in the ____" (Revelation 3:18)
- 14. "They sold...the poor for a ____

CTHOMAS
ARK BAPTIST NEWS

- of shoes" (Amos 2:6)
- 16. Antenna
- 18. Another name for the city of No
- 19. Corn ____
- 20. Far from destitute
- 23. Gospel writer
- 26. Large basin
- 27. More grand
- 28. London transportation
- 30. Shoots of a tree
- 33. "____ unto us! Who shall deliver us?" (1 Samuel 4:8)
- 34. Found in a pencil case
- 36. It is (poet.)
- 38. Japanese drama (var.)

ABN Crossword puzzle



Crossword answer, page 10

Crossword by Barbour Publishing, Inc.

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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.

Obituaries

Daniel Ray Hiser, 74, of Cabot, died May 7.

Hiser was a member of First Baptist Church in Jacksonville where he taught Sunday school for more than 30 years. He also served as the chaplain for Jacksonville Police Department and the Arkansas Department of Corrections.

He was preceded in death by his parents.

Hiser is survived by his wife, son and brother.

The funeral was held May 10 at the church.

Paul J. Crymes, 87, of Mountain View, died May 8.



A Vietnam veteran, Crymes served as a

deacon at Foothills Baptist Church in Mountain View.

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

Crymes is survived by his wife, two sons, two daughters, a brother, a sister, nine grandchildren, 13 great-grandchildren and two great-great grandchildren.

The funeral service was held May 10 at Foothills Baptist Church, Mountain View.

Lorene McLendon Reynolds, 89, of Benton, died May 9.



Reynolds had been a member of First Baptist Church of Benton for 50 years where

she served as the pastor's executive secretary until she retired and founded the Mother's Day Out program.

She was preceded in death by her parents and husband.

Reynolds is survived by a sister, four children, 13 grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

The funeral was held May 11 at Roller-Ballard Funeral Home followed by burial at Oaklawn Cemetery in Batesville.

Ralph Edward Branum, 94, of Hazen, died May 10.



An army veteran, Branum served as a pastor for more than 60 years in Washington, Florida, Alabama and Arkansas.

ABF hires summer interns

LITTLE ROCK - Kristen Boatman, Cole Jester and Selby Tucker will serve as summer interns at Arkansas Baptist Foundation (ABF).

Boatman is a senior accounting and finance double major at Ouachita Baptist University (OBU) from North Little Rock. After graduation, she plans to obtain her CPA certification and become an accountant.

Jester is a recent graduate of OBU with a degree in Christian studies and political science. He plans

to attend the University of Virginia School of Law in Charlottesville, Va., this fall.

Tucker is a senior accounting and political science double major at OBU from Hamburg. After graduation, she plans to obtain her CPA certification and attend law school.

The responsibilities of the interns include assisting the ABF staff in areas of finance, legal and accounting while also providing services to Arkansas Baptist churches, agencies and institutions.

He was preceded in death by three wives, two brothers and a sister.

He is survived by two daughters, a son, eight grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren.

A memorial service was held May 19 at First Baptist Church in Hazen.

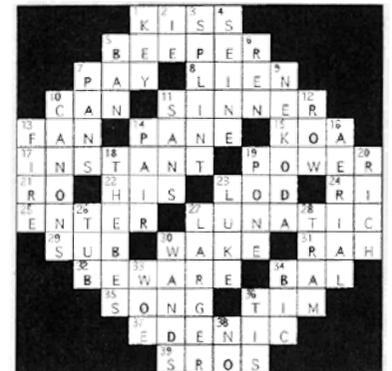
On the move

James Earlywine is serving as pastor at Clear Lake Baptist Church in Blytheville.

Baptist life

Washington Madison Baptist Association and Shiloh Community Church held a women's "We are One" retreat April 26-27 at Sky Ranch in Cave Springs, Okla. More than 19 churches from three states participated. Lori McDaniel, manager of the church initiatives team at the International Mission Board, was the guest speaker.

See crossword, page 9



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The Baptist Home, Monticello, is seeking a houseparent couple.

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Classifieds

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First Baptist Church, DeValls Bluff, is seeking a **pastor**. Send resumes to Bruce Wolfe, PO Box 358, DeValls Bluff, AR 72041.

Friendship Baptist Church is accepting resumes until June 19th, 2019, for a **full-time senior pastor**. Applicants must have substantial experience as senior pastor of a mid-size Southern Baptist church and have a college degree in ministerial related studies. Submit resume by mail to FBC, 767 Rocky Point Rd, Conway, AR 72032, Attn: Search Committee or email to: fbcsearchcommittee2019@gmail.com.

Bella Vista Baptist Church, Bella Vista, AR, is seeking a **senior pastor** to shepherd a loving congregation in Northwest Arkansas. Contact Renee Estes, restes@bvbaptist.com. 479-855-3748.

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.

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 email resumes to: brichey@connect2eastside.com. You may also include a sermon DVD or a link to a sermon video/audio.

OTHER STAFF POSITIONS

Mineral Area Baptist Association is searching

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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.

Baring Cross Baptist Church, Sherwood, is looking for a responsible **custodian** to clean our facilities. This is part time 20 hours a week. Must pass a background check and provide references. Please contact 501-833-2347 or email

bcbcariane@sbcglobal.net for more information.

First Baptist Church, Hardy, seeking **part-time worship leader** for congregational singing and adult choir. Send resume, inquiry to PO Box 27, Hardy, AR 72542, 870-856-3767.

FBC, McAlester, OK, is seeking a **FT worship/media pastor**. Please see our website for more information and to submit resume.

First Baptist Church, Lepanto, Arkansas, is seeking a **F/T youth pastor**. Parsonage provided. You may email resume to kyle@fbclepanto.com or mail to First Baptist Church, PO Box 400, Lepanto AR 72354.

Cocklebur Baptist, Ward, AR, is prayerfully seeking **part-time worship leader**. Accepting resumes until June 1. Email resumes to cbc4138@gmail.com or mail to Attn: Worship Leader Search Comm., 4138 Cocklebur Rd, Ward, AR 72176.

North Central Baptist Association is seeking a **full-time associational missionary**. Send resumes to ncbaclinton@gmail.com or mail to: NCBA, 268 Main St., Clinton, AR 72031.

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

MISCELLANEOUS

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MAY 26, 2019

Lee Strobel was an investigative journalist who went on a quest to disprove Christianity. As an investigative journalist, he looked the facts in the face. Strobel said, "In the face of this overwhelming avalanche of evidence in the case for Christ, the great irony was this: It would require much more faith for me to maintain my atheism than to trust in Jesus of Nazareth." Strobel said that if the resurrection was true, then everything else the Scripture says about Jesus is true. Strobel became a Christian and one of Christendom's greatest apologists.

Traditionally, criminals were left on the cross until dead, and then they became food for birds and wild dogs. What was left of the corpse would then be thrown into the Valley of Hinnom. Fortunately, Jewish law demanded a proper burial. Joseph of Arimathea requested Jesus' body from Pilate (Mark 15:43). Joseph was a member of the Sanhedrin, the very council that condemned Jesus to death. Unlike the other council members, Joseph was "looking forward to

the kingdom of God" (Mark 15:43). He may have thought Jesus really was the Messiah. Jesus' body was wrapped in fine linen and placed in a rich man's tomb (Mark 15:46).

The evidence of Jesus' resurrection is undeniable. Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome went to the tomb to anoint Jesus' body. They found an empty tomb. The angel told the women not to look for the living among the dead. The angel instructed them to go and tell His disciples and Peter because Jesus was going to Galilee ahead of them (Mark 16:7).

The women ran from the tomb, terrified and overwhelmed, and didn't tell anyone.

Christianity stands or falls on the historic bodily resurrection of Jesus from the dead. If there is no resurrection, there is no Christianity. The Apostle Paul wrote, "And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins" (1 Cor. 15:17). Jesus is alive today, defeating death for all who believe in Him.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Lives

MARK 15:42-47; 16:1-8 (HCSB)

The women ran from the tomb, terrified and overwhelmed, and didn't tell anyone.

There was a shepherd who found oil on his land and became very rich. The first thing he purchased was a Rolls Royce limousine. It was the kind that had a glass separating the chauffeur from the passenger compartment. When he took the limousine in for servicing, the mechanic asked, "What do you like best about it?" The shepherd said, "I can take my sheep to market without them licking the back of my neck." We need to be wise with the resources and abilities that the Lord graciously grants us.

The story of the dishonest manager is a difficult story. This manager squandered the master's assets (Luke 16:1). The master demanded that the manager explain himself and ordered his pink slip (Luke 16:2). The manager knew he was unable to do manual labor, and he was too proud to beg (Luke 16:3). His business plan was to reduce the debts others owed his master (Luke 16:5-7). The owner actually praised the manager for his actions (Luke 16:8).

At first glance, mismanagement and

dishonesty seem to be commended and rewarded. This is not the message at all. The master praised the manager because it was a smart business plan. It made the master look good; it looked to the long term, and the debtors would owe the manager a favor in the future.

Jesus put this story in a theological context. The children of the world are experts at making money, building relationships, and planning for the future. As God's people, we should be just as wise as those of the world in managing spiritual affairs. We need to use our opportunities wisely (Luke 16:9). We need to remain faithful to God in the use of our wealth (Luke 16:10-12).

We also need to be totally dedicated to the Lord (Luke 16:13). If our money is our master, God will be our servant. If God is our Master, possessions, wealth and abilities will be our servants, and these resources will be used to fulfill God's will and the building of His kingdom.

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

Exploit your friends

LUKE 16:1-13 (HCSB)

JUNE 2, 2019

The Apostle Paul's purpose for this letter is clear, "I have written so that you will know how people ought to act in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15). The foundation of truth is the gospel of Jesus Christ. Paul wrote that this was the "glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was entrusted to me" (1 Tim. 1:11). Paul coupled belief with behavior. Paul brought out the point that right belief (orthodoxy) would lead to right behavior (orthopraxy).

Paul wanted Timothy to guard the gospel or guard the truth. The threat would be an internal threat. What Paul predicted would happen in Ephesus had occurred (Acts 20:30). False teachers had infiltrated the church (1 Tim. 1:6-7). This is why Paul wanted Timothy to stay in Ephesus to hinder people from teaching "other doctrine ... myths and endless genealogies" which "promote empty speculations" and "fruitless discussion" (1 Tim. 1:3-4, 6). This all leads to deception because the people

begin to think there are additional rules beyond God's love and grace they must keep to be saved.

Paul instructed Timothy on the correct use of the Law. The Law has a restraining use, curbing sin in the lives of unbelievers (1 Tim. 1:9-10). The correct use of the Law will produce responsible teachers. Teachers must be good stewards of the gospel. The correct preaching of the Law will

lead sinners to the gospel, "Now the goal of our instruction is love that comes from a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith" (1 Tim. 1:5). The overflow from this position will have a favorable response among those needing Christ.

We live in a culture that does not accept that ultimate truth of the gospel. In the words of pastor and theologian Alistair Begg, "We live in a day where there is plausibility to anything and certainty in nothing." We have been entrusted to guard the gospel against error and the church from the infiltration of false teachers.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Entrusted

1 TIMOTHY 1:3-17 (HCSB)

lead sinners to the gospel, "Now the goal of our instruction is love that comes from a pure heart, a

Some of the greatest stories from all the armed conflicts in the history of the United States are about the spies. George Washington used spies to keep updated about British troop movements. These courageous spies were mostly regular folks, farmers, merchants and homemakers. Success or failure of a battle or campaign sometimes hinged on the information the spies brought back.

In this lesson, spies were assisted by one woman who demonstrated courageous faith. The spies Joshua sent to Jericho stayed at Rahab's house. The king of Jericho sent word to her to bring the spies out. She hid the spies on the roof and then lied to the king, telling him the men had left before the city gate was closed.

Rahab acknowledged that the Lord had given the land to the Israelites. She, as well as others in Jericho, heard how God led them out of Egypt, led them across the parted Red Sea, and gave them victory over the two Amorite

kings across the Jordan. This instilled fear in the people. The power of God that leads us to fear Him will lead us to trust Him. She said to the spies, "for the LORD your God is God in heaven above and on earth below" (Josh. 2:11b). She asked the spies to promise her that the Lord would show kindness to her family because she had helped them. They assured her that she and her family would receive kindness when the Lord gave them this land.

Rahab's faith in God moved her to action. God used her in a powerful way. Her actions would also lead to a legacy. Rahab became the wife of Salmon, who fathered Boaz in the book of Ruth. This means she was the great-grandmother of David. Ultimately, Rahab's trust and faithfulness allowed her to be listed in the genealogy of Jesus (Matt. 1:5-6).

God wants to use you and me in a powerful way. We first must acknowledge Him, fear Him, and be willing to be used regardless of the potential cost.

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

Rahab: Courageous faith

JOSHUA 2:1-14 (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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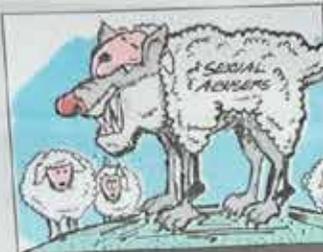
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Volume 118, Number 5

Leadership and apologetics

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Lisa Falknor
Special to the ABN

LITTLE ROCK — "Extremely

"Lead/Defend is a priority for me," she said, adding, "It's an opportunity to reach out to students — not just college stu-

Sarah Davis
Arkansas Baptist News

Sharing Christ among 'untouchables' in South

