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Pastors urged to 'travail in prayer'

LITTLE ROCK - The Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC) hosted the sixth annual Statewide Prayer Gathering Aug. 26-27 at Immanuel Baptist Church, Little Rock. Arkansas Baptist pastors, staff members, associational missionaries and church leaders gathered to pray for a revival in their ministries, their churches, the state, the nation and the world.

"I used to hear the 'old-timers' talk about 'travail in prayer.' You don't hear that much anymore," said J.D. "Sonny" Tucker, executive director of the ABSC. "I didn't really know what travail was. It sounds preachy. It really means painful or laborious effort. We are going to ask you to travail in prayer - deep, heart-searching, painful, laborious effort."

Bill Elliff, pastor of The Summit Church, North Little Rock, member of the Prayer and Spiritual Awakening Task Force and lead facilitator for this year's prayer gathering, told attendees that Southern Baptist leaders in other states have noticed the revival taking place in Arkansas.

"Last week, a man on the staff of the California Baptist Convention called me and said, 'We have heard that God is moving in Arkansas among the pastors and churches in the area of prayer and spiritual

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Dale Noe (right), pastor of First Baptist Church, Marked Tree, chats with Marked Tree Mayor Danny Johnson in Johnson's office. Johnson is a member of First Baptist.

Noe embraces community, revitalization

Caleb Yarbrough
Arkansas Baptist News

MARKED TREE - One of the great ironies of today's world is that while we are more connected than ever - through the Web and social media - many people struggle to experience the face-to-face relationships that were common to the front porches and main streets of generations past.

Upon becoming pastor of First Baptist Church, Marked Tree, in 2016, Dale Noe felt God was not just calling him to serve as pastor of First Baptist, but as a mis-

sionary to the town of Marked Tree.

"I don't feel like I was just called to First Baptist, Marked Tree. I was called to Marked Tree," said Noe. "My prayer has been, and my heart has been, that we would see the church revitalized and that that would pour out into the streets. And then we would see this town revitalized.

"We all have brokenness because of sin. So when you engage people and you start talking about, 'How can I pray for you?' many times they will tell you where they are broken, and that opens a gospel conversation. But it also gives me

the chance to pray for them, to love on them, to meet them where they're at," said Noe.

"And I think that's, to me, the ministry of Jesus. He didn't stay in one location and have people come to Him; He went out to where the people were and then He met them where they were at," he said.

Take a walk with "Bro. Dale," as he is known, in downtown Marked Tree, and you will quickly realize his evangelistic and pastoral strategy. Noe's unpretentious compassion for his local community is uplifting and infectious.

"If I can just encourage any pastor who might hear this, it's great to put in your study time. It's great to have that sermon down and locked up and to be expositional and biblical - it's awesome. But if you're not loving on the community, feeding the community, working with the community - who are you going to preach that sermon to?" said Noe.

"He (Noe) has a heart for Jesus and a heart for the people," said Robin Foster, associational missionary for Trinity Baptist Association in Trumann. "There are a couple families that are driving from Jonesboro (to attend First Baptist) now, just because of what is going on there in Marked Tree."

"To me the greatest feat is what he is doing with bringing down the racial tensions that we see in our nation," said Foster. "If you go to First Baptist Church, Marked Tree, you see the gospel breaking that down."

Growing up in east Tennessee, Noe and his brother were the only two white kids in a majority black neighborhood. "When the white community didn't want anything to do with us because we were so poor, it was our brothers and sisters - and

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ABN Podcast 102 - Caleb Yarbrough, ABN associate editor, chats with Dale Noe, pastor of First Baptist Church, Marked Tree. Noe shares his heart for church revitalization, his outgoing and personal approach to community outreach and ministry, how God brought him to Marked Tree and how he feels God will use First Baptist to continue to reach Marked Tree, and surrounding communities, for Christ in the future.

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ABN Digest

Stories of interest
to Arkansas Baptists

Sanders, former WH press secretary, to write memoir

LITTLE ROCK – Former White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders will release a memoir in fall 2020, according to an announcement by St. Martin's Press Sept. 5.

Sanders, a wife and mom of three young children, stepped down this summer after two years as press secretary for President Donald Trump. A native Arkansan and graduate of Ouachita Baptist University, Sanders became only the third woman in U.S. history to serve as White House press secretary.

Upon her departure, Trump called her "wonderful" and encouraged her to run for governor in Arkansas. The book adds to speculation that Sanders is planning to run in Arkansas, which votes for a new governor in 2022.

Sanders' father, Mike Huckabee, former president of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, served as pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church, Pine Bluff, from 1980-1986 and Beech Street First Baptist Church, Texarkana, from 1986-1992. Huckabee served as the state's governor from 1996-2007.

Annual See You at the Pole prayer event set for Sept. 25

THOUSANDS of students across Arkansas and the nation are set to gather in prayer at about 7 a.m. local time around their school flagpoles Sept. 25.

See You at the Pole (SYATP) encourages students and leaders to engage in prayer Sept. 22-28.

Leaders and students in Arkansas are requested to email photos and accounts of their SYATP experience to the *Arkansas Baptist News* at abn@arkansasbaptist.org for possible publication.

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

One Day event to impact north Arkansas

THOUSANDS of Arkansas Baptists are expected to converge on north central Arkansas Oct. 5 to participate in the Acts 1:8 One Day Mission Trip to be held in the region.

"(It) is going to be an incredible day of kingdom impact in Independence Baptist Association as 2,000-plus Arkansas Baptists gather in Batesville and Mountain View," said Sam Roberts, community missions strategist and assistant team leader of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC) missions team.

"With 18 different outreach ministries at more than 120 ministry sites in Batesville and Mountain View, there will be an abundance of opportunities for Arkansas Baptists to serve the needs of residents of all ages while engaging them with the gospel," Roberts added.

The deadline to register for the One Day event is Sept. 17, notes the ABSC registration website absc.org/oneday. 2019 marks the ninth year for the Acts 1:8 One Day Mission Trip.

"Ministry teams are filled on a first-come, first-served basis, so the sooner you can register, the better opportunity you have to receive your ministry choice," the website states. Activities will include block parties, medical/dental clinics, home repair, prayer teams and sports camps.

Ronnie Toon, associational missionary for Independence Baptist Association, said there

are many reasons why churches should participate.

"The most compelling reason is obedience to the Great Commission. Acts 1:8 provides an easy way for a person to be on mission in their local communities or a short drive to the Batesville area. With so many different ministry opportunities, a person can serve in an area of ministry that fits their giftedness and interests," he said.

Toon added that participants should expect to be blessed by serving on Oct. 5.

"For me, it is the joy of serving Christ. Many of us have served in ministry-related tasks and discovered that we are the ones who are blessed," he said. "Another benefit is that we are a part of something that is bigger than ourselves. Acts 1:8 is about enlarging the kingdom and making Christ known. Our prayer is that with the collective energy and passion of 2,000 wonderful volunteers, we can push back darkness and be a part of a great move of God."

For 2019, there are two kickoff ministry site locations in Independence association. They are Southside High School, 70 Scott Drive, Batesville, and Mountain View First Baptist Church, 224 King Ave., Mountain View. The event starts at 9 a.m. and concludes at 4:30 p.m.

Toon said the potential impact in Independence association is "huge."

"Acts 1:8 creates an oppor-



Acts 1:8 One Day Mission Trip volunteers do yardwork in 2016. Since the statewide event was launched nine years ago, thousands of Arkansas Baptists have volunteered, and hundreds of people have been reached for Jesus Christ.

tunity for churches to partner together for kingdom purposes. It also encourages our vision of getting a gospel witness to every home in our area ... (and) allows churches to be intentional in developing ministry relationships beyond the walls of the church."

Roberts said Toon and the association's One Day Leadership Team have prepared well.

"As a result of One Day, people will be saved; disciples, made, and churches, strengthened, not only in Independence Baptist Association, but across Arkansas as missionaries return home with a renewed energy and passion to reach their communities for Christ," he said, who added the event is funded primarily through gifts to the Dixie Jackson Arkansas Missions Offering.

"(It is) planned through

leadership of the local association and ABSC missions team, and served by missionaries from ABSC churches of all sizes and locations across our state," said Roberts. "One Day is a beautiful picture of cooperative ministries at its best."

Toon said he is excited to see what God will do in the lives of participants, as well as local residents who volunteers will be reaching out to.

"We are humbled and grateful to host Acts 1:8. Our churches are excited for the opportunity and have sincere passion to see the Lord work in a great way. It has been a joy to watch so many people get involved and work so hard to make this a good day. We hope this is a positive experience to every missionary who participates and becomes a catalyst for greater missional service," said Toon.

WBU wrestling cleans up county Rail-Trail

WALNUT RIDGE – Williams Baptist University (WBU) wrestling team members recently volunteered to clean up a section of the Lawrence County Rail-Trail as a service project to benefit residents.

The WBU wrestlers converged on a section of trail near the Williams campus in northern Walnut Ridge.

The rail-trail is a six-mile walking/biking trail that stretches from the WBU campus through Walnut Ridge and Hoxie. The trail was extended last month to reach the Williams campus.

"Our team was excited

about helping our community. With the new connection from the rail-trail to campus, this is a great way to bridge the gap between the Walnut Ridge community and WBU," said Todd Allen, WBU's head wrestling coach.

The team trimmed weeds and picked up debris from the trail. Their efforts will allow trail runners and bikers an easier route between campus and downtown Walnut Ridge.

Allen said the service project allows the team to display the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics' four core values: respect, servant leadership, integrity and



responsibility.

"This was also a great kickstart to our school year. It really sets the tone on the kind of team I want us to be this year. We need to be servant leaders. This is a way for our

team to serve the community and people that we otherwise would not reach. This is how I want our guys to live their lives, as servants to each other and their community," said Allen.

Howe named EC communications vp

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) – Jonathan P. Howe has been named vice president of communications for the Southern Baptist Convention's (SBC) Executive Committee (EC) effective Sept. 5.



Howe

Howe, of Franklin, Tenn., will oversee all SBC EC communications including SBC.net, SBC LIFE, Baptist Press, social media initiatives and other media and messaging strategies.

Howe most recently served as director of strategic initiatives with LifeWay Christian Resources, a position he held for eight years. In that role, he was responsible for the content strategy and marketing of thomrainer.com, edstetzer.com and lifewaypastors.com.

He is also co-host of "SBC This Week," a weekly podcast he and Amy Whitfield of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary have produced since June 2015. At LifeWay, Howe also hosted and produced weekly podcast episodes of "Rainer on Leadership" and

"Revitalize & Replant" and developed and implemented a new content strategy for factsandtrends.net.

EC President Ronnie Floyd said, "Jonathan Howe is one of the younger and most influential voices in Southern Baptist life," Floyd said. "He understands the various channels of communication in our world today and, as our vice president of communications, he will help us communicate God's truth and our vision in current ways."

Floyd added that "SBC This Week" will soon become the

official podcast of the Executive Committee.

In a related move, Roger S. (Sing) Oldham, who was elected as vice president of convention relations in 2007 and had his duties expanded to include administrative oversight of communications in 2010, was reassigned to his previous role and given additional duties.

Howe is a member of Forest Hills Baptist Church, Nashville, Tenn., where his wife, Beth, serves on staff as minister to children. They have four children – Ethan, 15, Parker, 12, Micah, 6, and Avery, 5.

NOE

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particularly for me, some of the other children in the African-American, or black, community – who were my friends. When I would get picked on, they would step up.

"It instilled in me a love for people that transcends color. ... It really made me understand that people are not defined by white or black ... It's being defined by (the fact) that these are precious souls," said Noe.

Before Noe and his family stepped foot in Marked Tree, God impressed upon his and his wife's hearts that they would be used by God to bring about racial reconciliation in the community.

"I praise God that we have now become an integrated church," said Noe. "Later this month we are going to celebrate 110 years, but it's only in the past year-and-a-half that we have gone from that 'rich white church' to a church that welcomes everyone."

"We want to welcome precious souls into our congregation. ... That to me is just a picture of the kingdom," said Noe.

Following the call

While he felt a calling to ministry as a young child growing up on the "wrong side of the tracks" in east Tennessee, Noe said he ran from his calling and did not surrender fully to ministry until decades later.

At 18, Noe began selling cars in Florida, where he had relocated during high school to live with his father, and

eventually worked his way up to the role of vice president for a tire company. Noe surrendered to ministry at age 40. A short time before, he had lost his dream job on the same day that he was diagnosed with stage-three kidney cancer.

"That's a rough day, but it was during that time that God reminded me of my calling. He said, 'I am going to get you through this, but I own you now,'" said Noe. "When God gets you to that point, you really don't have a choice other than to submit."

After surrendering to his call, Noe continued to work in the secular world but began supply preaching within his local association in northern Illinois, where he and his family were living at the time. Soon after, Noe was called to pastor Victory Rock Fellowship, a small, struggling Southern Baptist congregation about 60 miles northwest of Chicago in Marengo, Ill.

"They actually had a closure date set, but God started to move and work, and we saw that church come to life," said Noe. "Over the course of a couple years, we went from about eight to as many as 70."

Noe served Victory Rock Fellowship in a bi-vocational capacity. While he served there, Noe's daughter began praying that God would allow her father to move into full-time ministry in the South. After going through multiple rounds of interviews with a church in Amarillo, Texas, Noe was contacted by First Baptist Church, Marked Tree.

At home in Marked Tree

"God shifted our direction, brought us here, and we have seen this church go from 40 or 50 to as many as 200 now on a regular basis," said Noe.

First Baptist recently had to expand its parking lot to accommodate its increased attendance. The church was gifted a building across the street from the existing church facility. The building, currently being renovated, will eventually serve as a multi-use community center and fellowship hall, according to Noe.

More than the quadrupling of regular church attendance or the expansion of the church's facilities, Noe is most excited that lots of people are becoming Christians and getting baptized.

"It's great to celebrate who's there on Sunday mornings, but we've seen a tremendous outpouring of God's grace and mercy in leading many people to Christ and salvation," said Noe.

The Annual Church Profile (ACP) year ends in September. During the current ACP year First Baptist has baptized 56



Noe

people. Last year the church baptized 47 people.

"There is just this movement of God; we just can't fight against it. His outpouring of love towards this community, towards this county has been just unfathomable at times," said Noe.

Most church revitalization experts might argue small, rural, impoverished and racially divided towns like Marked Tree are more often catalysts for church decline than revitalization. To Noe, the uncommon nature of the church's growth, in just a few short years, is evidence that God is alive and at work in his community.

While Noe said that he is naturally introverted, he cited Matt. 9:36 (NASB) as a verse that led him to pushing himself out of his shell and into his community in order to better reach and serve them.

"This compassion that Christ had for the people has to override the introverted part of me," said Noe.

"If I am truly in love with Christ the way I say I am, then how can I not live out that great love that He had for me and model it for others?"

Contact Caleb Yarbrough at caleb@arkansasbaptist.org.

PRAYER

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awakening," said Elliff. "Isn't that beautiful?"

"There is a stirring across our nation," continued Elliff. "In fact, Dave Bunch, who is head of the national prayer committee, says that they can give evidence that there are more people praying for revival

and awakening at this moment in America than any other time in human history."

According to Elliff, the purpose of the Statewide Prayer Gathering was to "ignite a movement of extraordinary prayer that would lead to revival in the church and awakening among the lost for the rapid advancement of the kingdom in Arkansas and around the world."

ABN Digest

Stories of interest
to Arkansas Baptists

Russellville leaders explore options in opposing casino

RUSSELLVILLE – As actions and counter-actions continue in the debate about building a casino in Pope County, the Russellville City Council gathered in a specially called meeting Aug. 27 to discuss annexing land that is earmarked for the casino that possibly would be built by Cherokee Nation Businesses, according to the *Arkansas Democrat Gazette*.

In the casino proposal,



Harris

Cherokee Nation Businesses plans to build the casino on 130 acres north of Interstate 40, which is on the northern edge of Russellville. The parcels of land proposed for the Cherokees' casino is largely used now for agricultural purposes.

A seven-page outline of annexation procedures and avenues the city could use to acquire the land was distributed at the meeting. According to that document, contiguous (adjoining) land typically cannot be annexed if the property is used only for agricultural or horticultural purposes.

However, the prohibition on annexing agricultural land is not absolute if it can be shown that the best use of the land is for something other than agriculture or horticulture, according to the document.

Land contiguous to a city can be annexed by either an ordinance referred to the voters or by a landowner petitioning the city to be let into the city limits, which would also require the county's approval, the *Democrat-Gazette* reported.

Russellville Mayor Richard Harris said that he hopes to work with county officials to reach an agreement about the land.

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

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 'One Day' that could alter eternity

Once upon a time I served the denomination as a leader of what I believe was one of the most comprehensive and tactical local church mission engagement initiatives ever conceived. It was called the Acts 1:8 Challenge, and it was birthed in 2004 following the Southern Baptist doctrinal study published by LifeWay Christian Resources. 2019



Pressing On

Tim Yarbrough
Phil. 3:14

marks the 15th anniversary of the Acts 1:8 Challenge.

From about 2004 until 2010, the Acts 1:8 Challenge sought to enlist churches around eight "kingdom-growing responses": Prepare, Learn, Pray, Give, Go, Tell, Send and Multiply. In addition to a leadership guide, a plethora of resources were developed around these responses to support churches of all sizes to articulate a comprehensive mission strategy designed to assist them in tak-

ing the gospel to their community (Jerusalem), region or state (Judea), nation (Samaria) and the world (ends of the earth).

In all, about 6,000 Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) churches made a declaration to "embrace the challenge" on some level as they sought to carry out Jesus' charge to the first-century Church in Acts 1:8.

In 2010, I left the SBC entity primarily responsible for the Acts 1:8 Challenge to become editor of your state Baptist news service. For the most part, work to promote the initiative in churches ended in the fall of 2010 when new leadership took the helm at the North American Mission Board. Since then, resources and a website built around the initiative have been discontinued.

In 2019, some of the 42 autonomous state Baptist

conventions still deploy Acts 1:8 Challenge initiatives in one form or another through events, studies and resources for churches.

What's more, vestiges of the Acts 1:8 Challenge are scattered across the Southern Baptist landscape, evidenced on many church websites that proclaim they are an "Acts 1:8 Church" that builds an "Acts 1:8 Strategy" around the last recorded words of Jesus in Scripture.

Jesus' charge in Acts 1:8 to the first-century Church is no less true for the 21st-century Church. Our Lord's last recorded words were given to a small gathering of about 120 believers according to Acts 1:15 - a small church - prior to His ascension into heaven: "But you will receive power

when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" Acts 1:8 (HCSB).

Jesus' instruction to His followers to be "witnesses" until His return follows His commission to believers in Matthew 28:19-20 to be about making "disciples of all nations." Acts 1:8 promises the guidance of the Holy Spirit as believers share the good news and make disciples in honor of King Jesus. Literally, the "where" charge of Acts 1:8 follows the "who" articulated in the Great Commission.

One of the beautiful things I loved about the Acts 1:8 Challenge was that any church - regardless of size or location - was encouraged to

become a "worldwide mission center" to further the Great Commission by following tenets found in the Acts 1:8 Challenge initiative. What's more, in addition to its primary focus of the local church, the initiative was inclusive of all aspects of our Baptist denomination - local associations, state conventions and national agencies.

Of course, the majority of SBC churches are small, so where is the smaller membership church in all of this? The reality is that most churches in North America can be classified as "small" membership churches. A LifeWay Christian Resources survey places more than 80 percent of Southern Baptist churches

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An apology is in order

On the front page of our Aug. 1 edition, the *Arkansas Baptist News* (ABN) published a screen image about a new newspaper - the *Arkadelphia Dispatch* - which has been started by graduates of Ouachita Baptist University.

The screen image with the article included a photo and article about former Henderson State University President Glen Jones.

It was not the intent of the ABN to paint Jones in a bad light by including the screen image. The ABN

should have excluded or blurred the image to make the front page of the *Dispatch* unreadable. It was an oversight, plain and simple. The focus of our story was intended to be about the newspaper started by Ouachita graduates, and not Jones.

As editor, I have reached out to Jones to apologize for the error. The commitment of the ABN is to honor and glorify God in all things we do, but in this instance we obviously fell short of that commitment.

When it's all about Him.

HE MUST INCREASE, BUT I MUST DECREASE.



When it's all about you.

JUST ONE MORE SELFIE TO POST!



ABN Cartoon by Gary Thomas



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Is the Bible reliable? – Part 2a

The evangelical view of the Bible is one that makes the Bible extremely important. If there is an error in the Bible, well ... then we evangelicals have some serious issues with which to deal. Most conservative evangelicals claim that the Bible is inerrant, infallible, inspired and authoritative. But what do each of these mean, and can such claims be defended? That is where we turn here. Let's start at the end of our list: the authority of Scripture.



Deep Waters

Chad Meeks

Since the Bible is a book (technically a set of books) given to humanity by God, it has authority. If the Bible tells me to love my neighbor – given that it is a word

from God – I should love my neighbor. Now, if my next-door neighbor told me that I should only eat duck on the second Sunday of every month, I am under no moral obligation to only eat duck on said day merely based upon his word. He – though maybe a wonderful neighbor – is just a man like me. He has no ultimate authority to tell me what is what when it comes to morals (specifically, ethical eating practices). If, however, the Bible were to instruct me to only eat duck on the second Sunday of every month, given that it is the Word of God (and, thus, authoritative), well then I am obligated (morally and theologically) to obey the command. (Keep in mind: There is no such command. I am merely using a silly illustration to make a serious point.)

Now, you and I may not like this command, but that really doesn't matter. If God has commanded it, and He is the infinite, omnipotent, omniscient and omnibenevolent Creator of the universe, He has a bit more of a say in what is moral and what isn't than we do.

In fact, Protestant Reformers coined a phrase to show how important the Bible is: *sola scriptura*. *Sola scriptura* is a simple Latin phrase that means "the Bible alone." The Bible alone – above all magistrates and authorities – is the sole and ultimate authority in all things of faith, practice and Christian belief.

Why do I mention this? It is important that one understands what authority means. The Bible has authority, not because men say it does but because it is a word that comes from God (or at least that's what we believe). If the Bible didn't come from God, then its authority would be questionable (if not completely undermined). But since it comes from God, we are able to rely upon its words as if it is God speaking directly to us – giving us guidance and instruction about Who He is, who we are, how we should act and how we can come to know Him.

But how do we know the Bible comes from God? After all, Muslims say that the Koran comes from God, but Christians would strongly disagree with that claim. We need to have a good answer to explain why we think the Bible alone – of all books – comes from God. That is where I will focus in my next column.

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

Letter to the Editor

Tolerance in the church

The Faith and Ethics column by Larry Page in the Aug. 29 edition of the *Arkansas Baptist News* brought out some good points. The federal government and the news media claim the No. 1 religious belief is no belief. Brother Page mentioned that just 23.1 percent of the U.S. had no religion, that

23 percent were Catholic and 22.5 percent evangelical. Add Eastern Orthodox and non-denominational and most of the U.S. would be Christians.

He was right about tolerance in the church. I'm reminded of the deacon who was decorating his dad's grave on Father's Day when he looked

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A pattern of growth

I enjoy knitting. It's an occasional, relaxing pastime that helps me feel creative and stretches me a bit as I learn new techniques.

My daughter, however, is the true knitter in the family. Where my knitting is an on-again, off-again enjoyment, hers is a full-blown hobby that she would love to morph into a small side

business. She always has a project going, makes gifts for everyone, is constantly trying new patterns and techniques, and has quite the stash of yarn. When I have a question or am stumped by a knitting problem, I go to my daughter before I go anywhere else, because I'm pretty sure she knows the answer.

My daughter and I respond very similarly to knitting in many ways. We both derive great pleasure and a sense of relaxation from knitting. We are both learning new techniques. We are at very different levels of expertise, to be sure, and she churns out

many more finished projects than I do. But, knitting is still beneficial to me, just as it is to her.

This whole train of thought hit me one morning as I was praying through a spiritual discipline the Lord has been teaching me more about

lately. Many of the things I'd been reading discuss an approach to this discipline that

I just cannot take because the framework of my life does not allow it. The authors I'm reading are ministry professionals, many of them with a large amount of control over how they can structure each day. I, on the other hand, have to work around the framework of homeschooling and my job and don't quite have the same level of flexibility. So, I've struggled and wondered and prayed about just how to take the information I'm learning and apply it to my own framework.

The mental picture of my enjoyment of knitting compared to my daughter's

expertise was just the image I needed to help me process growing in this spiritual discipline. Just because I cannot devote attention to it in the same way that these great spiritual leaders have done does not mean I cannot grow. It simply means that I am different. My growth will just look a little different, possibly a little simpler.

We often refuse to learn and grow because we can't reach the amazing heights of our heroes of the faith. That refusal, my friends, is not the humility of acknowledging our betters. Instead, it is a sin of comparison and refusal. Obedience is just the opposite. It is recognizing that God can be trusted to grow us even if that growth looks different in our own lives than in someone else's.

I'm ready to grow. I'm excited about growth. And I'm trusting that the God Who is leading me will grow me in just the way He intends.

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

Join Baptists in offering help, hope

Southern Baptists provide the third-largest disaster relief force in the United States, behind only the American Red Cross and Salvation Army. Whether a flood, hurricane, tornado, fire, bombing or other disaster, a strong well-trained volunteer force

of more than 70,000 stand by to provide emergency meals for both disaster victims and first responders, chainsaw crews to clear downed trees, mud-out crews for flooded homes, hot showers for victims and first responders, tarp crews to temporarily cover damaged rooftops and communication specialists who can coordinate emergency response communication even when all cellphone towers, phone lines and power lines are down.

Arkansas is blessed to have a strong Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC), which oversees a strong and growing disaster relief (DR) force. This year, in the wake

of record flooding across the state, Southern Baptist churches connected to Arkansas Baptist DR were able to quickly, efficiently and effectively deploy well-trained volunteers to assist victims. Many churches that were not connected to Arkansas Baptist

DR scrambled to do what they could and learned as they went.

If your church is not connected to this powerful DR force, it should be. Larger churches can purchase equipment, get volunteers trained and certified, and provide multiple teams. Smaller churches can partner with their local Baptist association to do the same.

For those who wonder why Southern Baptists place so much effort on "humanitarian aid," perhaps it should be mentioned that while Southern Baptists last year prepared more than 2.1 million meals and accumulated nearly 90,000 days of service time,

Southern Baptists witnessed more than 540 professions of new-found belief in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ Himself met people at their point of need. He cared for the sick, the hurting, the hungry and the desperate. Jesus said, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matt. 25:40, KJV).

Today, there are a growing number of people in our churches who, in addition to financially contributing to these efforts, want to put their hands on the work. Southern Baptist DR is a powerful, well-organized, 51-year-old force with whom to partner. Volunteers are well-trained in proven processes, efficient procedures and mandated protocol.

For information about to get involved, contact your local Baptist associational office or visit the ABSC DR page at absc.org/ministries/disasterrelief.

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



Answering the Call

Eric Ramsey

Sharp: 'God is sending the nations to us'

Sarah Davis
Arkansas Baptist News

LITTLE ROCK – The Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC) hosted Terry Sharp, convention and network relations leader for the International Mission Board (IMB), during the ABSC's monthly general staff meeting.

"We are excited about what God's doing in Arkansas," said Sharp. "We are so grateful for you, so grateful for your churches and grateful for all that you are doing around the world. Thank you for the way that you pray and you give and you go so people can have the opportunity to hear the name of Jesus."

Sharp gave an update of the mission work being done internationally and nationally.

According to Sharp, baptisms reported to the IMB increased by 6,000 in 2018, and the number of IMB church plants has tripled. More than

150 unengaged and unreached people groups in East Asia have been engaged, and more than 100 East Asian people groups now have access to Scriptures and resources in their languages. Chinese churches in partnership with the IMB have seen more than 100 short-term mission teams engage with 33 unreached people groups. Dispersed Venezuela believers are planting churches and joining the work of IMB missionaries throughout South and Central America. IMB missionaries are ministering to Syrian refugees, and they see the refugees responding to the gospel.

"The IMB really does believe that every church can reach every nation," said Sharp. "That's more than just a theme. That's the heartbeat of what we are about. Every church has a vital role in taking the gospel to every nation."

Sharp presented the "diaspora" mission opportunity available in North America,

and the work IMB and the North American Mission Board is doing. Diaspora refers to the dispersion of people groups from their original homelands.

"We want people to go out here to Little Rock and get on a plane and go to the nations because we need to go and we need to take the gospel," said Sharp. "But we also encourage people who have a heart for missions and who have a heart for the nations to go out to the airport and welcome the planes and welcome the nations because God is sending the nations to us."

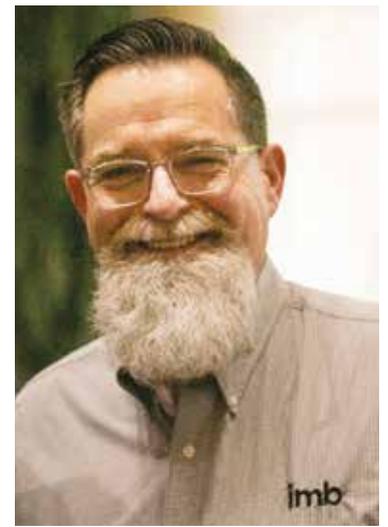
"We have refugees in this country, and we have immigrants who are living next door. We have international students – over a million – coming to the United States every single year," said Sharp. "And many of these immigrants, many of these refugees, many of these international students are coming from

the least reached areas of the world, and we have a chance to love them."

Even if the people never return back to their countries, gospel conversations can flow back to the unreached countries through communications with their family and friends, said Sharp.

To assist with diaspora missions, Baptist Collegiate Ministry (BCM) has created welcomingthenations.com to help connect collegiate ministries and churches to international student ministries and provide resources.

The IMB has also created peoplegroups.info to help churches discover and visualize people groups living in North America. According to Sharp, 360 unreached people groups have migrated to the United States. Jamie Naramore, international church strategist for the ABSC, said there are 75 unreached or unengaged people groups in Arkansas alone.



Sharp

"We have a chance to show them the love of Jesus and share the love of Jesus," said Sharp. "We are seeing some incredible things take place."

Sharp also announced upcoming events happening in 2020, including the Reaching the Nations in North America conference, which will be in Dallas, and the Every Church, Every Nation conference, which will be in Houston.

Contact Sarah Davis at sarah@arkansasbaptist.org.

Southern Baptists stage for Dorian relief

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (BP) – As of press time, Southern Baptists were staging for response to Hurricane Dorian after the powerful hurricane swept through the Bahamas before swiping northeast North Carolina as a Category 1 storm

at Cape Hatteras Sept. 6.

First responders in the Bahamas were working to reach survivors after the storm's devastating landfall on those islands. Southern Baptists are working to serve both fronts.

Search and rescue opera-

tions and damage assessments began in the Bahamas shortly after Dorian moved northward toward the eastern coast of the U.S. Forty-four are known dead in the Bahamas with many more missing.

The North American Mission Board dispatched a Send Relief tractor trailer filled with rolled roofing, flood cleanup supplies, and some food was at the North Carolina Baptist disaster relief facility in Red Springs, N.C.

Visit arkansasbaptist.org for the latest Dorian disaster relief updates.

LETTER

continued from page 5

up and saw a Chinese member of his church putting food on his dad's grave.

The deacon was shocked and said, "Hey, Billy, when is your dad going to eat that food you brought him?"

"I don't know," his friend said. "Probably about the same time your dad smells the flowers you got him."

Nick Nixon
Charleston

PRESSING ON

continued from page 4

as having a primary worship attendance of 199 or less.

"And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" Matthew 16:18 (ESV).

What's more, nearly all new church starts are small. A lot of churches that have been

around for centuries are small. Is their importance in kingdom work less significant because of their size? Of course not! A focus on Acts 1:8 as an articulation of where to make disciples can provide smaller membership churches with purpose and direction to fulfill Christ's mission to reconcile the world unto Himself (2 Corinthians 5:18-21).

In Arkansas, you and your (most likely) small church have an opportunity to be a part of a wonderful event in the coming weeks in the Acts 1:8 One Day Mission Trip.

This year the One Day

event is being held Oct. 5 in north central Arkansas and hosted by Independence Baptist Association (see related story, page 2).

Churches serving through the Acts 1:8 One Day event across Arkansas have impacted eternity forever, and your church can too by taking a group. Registration closes Sept. 17, so there is still time

to promote your church's participation to take the gospel to your state (Judea).

Ultimately, no matter what form it takes, my prayer for your church is to be obedient to the gospel of Jesus Christ – by whatever means possible within its context and sphere of influence.

May God bless you and your church's efforts to bring a renewed sense of urgency to communicate and share the gospel with a lost and dying world so desperately in need of Jesus!

And if the Acts 1:8 One Day Mission Trip is a part of your strategy, I hope to see you there!

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



CHAPEL RENOVATED – Ouachita Baptist University's Berry Chapel was renovated during the summer. Updates included painting interior walls, installing new flooring and refurbishing pews. The renovations finished in time for the 2019-2020 school year. Classes began Tuesday, Aug. 20.

Spread the gospel through the Dixie Jackson offering

THROUGH GIVING to and participating in the Dixie Jackson Arkansas Missions Offering and Week of Prayer, you can make an eternal impact.

The Dixie Jackson Arkansas Missions Offering and Week of Prayer each September is intended to highlight and encourage gospel work that Arkansas Baptists are faithfully supporting in our state and beyond.

“God has honored the prayers and the sacrificial gifts of Arkansas Baptists in reaching many people in our state with the good news of Jesus. As we approach the time of concentrated prayer and sacrificial giving where we emphasize what He has done across our state, I am very grateful for the faithfulness of Arkansas Baptists,” said Bob Harper,

missions team leader, Arkansas Baptist State Convention.

The 2019 statewide goal is \$1.75 million. The suggested Dixie Jackson Week of Prayer is Sept. 8, but churches may choose to a different week or format in praying for missions in the state.

“Dixie Jackson has allowed the gospel to be shared across our state in many different ways to various people groups. Block parties, hunger sites, Acts 1:8 One Day Mission day, plus a new seminary prison program are just a few of the ways the gospel has been shared and continues to be shared. God’s Spirit blesses the efforts of His people as we share with those in need. Dixie Jackson is not just an offering; it is who we as Arkansas Baptists are. From assisting flood victims to sharing with peoples of different nationalities here

in our state, gifts to Dixie make the gospel of Christ relevant to all of our lives,” Harper said.

“May God bless the faithfulness of His children as we pray, go and give.”

Numerous resources to help churches highlight the Dixie Jackson Arkansas Missions Offering and Week of Prayer are available at absc.org. Resources include videos, lesson plans, a social media kit and a planning guide.

“I encourage you to watch the videos in your church, or those posted online, to get a small glimpse of His awesome work among us,” Harper said.

Who was Dixie Jackson?

Dixie Jackson was a vibrant Christian woman who lived the gospel. Residing in Dardanelle, she raised eight children and served faithfully in

her church. In 1914, two years after her husband’s death, she accepted a full-time position with the Arkansas chapter of the Woman’s Missionary Union (W.M.U.). She traveled the state, training women and spreading the word about Arkansas Baptist missions efforts.

With much encouragement from Jackson, the first Week of Prayer for Arkansas state missions was held in 1926. Before

Jackson died in early 1929, an offering was added to the Week of Prayer, with more than \$1,000 being collected to aid mission projects statewide in that first year. Jackson’s investment in Arkansas Baptist women and missions lit a passion that has remained vibrant through the years. In 1935, the annual offering was named the Dixie Jackson Offering for State Missions in her memory.

Churches connect with ABSC

LITTLE ROCK – The Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC) hosted a Connection Day for new pastors, leaders and churches at the state convention building in Little Rock Tuesday, Aug. 20.

Guest pastors and church leaders were introduced to J.D. “Sonny” Tucker, execu-

tive director of the ABSC, and to each of the teams associated with the ABSC. Guests also met Tim Yarbrough, editor of the *Arkansas Baptist News*; Bobby Thomas, president and CEO of Arkansas Baptist Foundation, and Derek Brown, executive director of the Arkansas Baptist Children’s Homes and Family Ministries.

Churches participating were: City of Grace, Little Rock; The Bridge, Wynne; City Church, Conway; First Baptist Church, Earle; Village Creek Baptist Church, Diaz; Connection Church, Rogers; Collective Church, Benton; Calvary Baptist Church, Dumas; Summit Bible Church, Summit; New Covenant Fellowship, Fordyce; Brown Temple #2, Portland; and Tabernacle of God, Marion.

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One-day women's conference Sept. 28

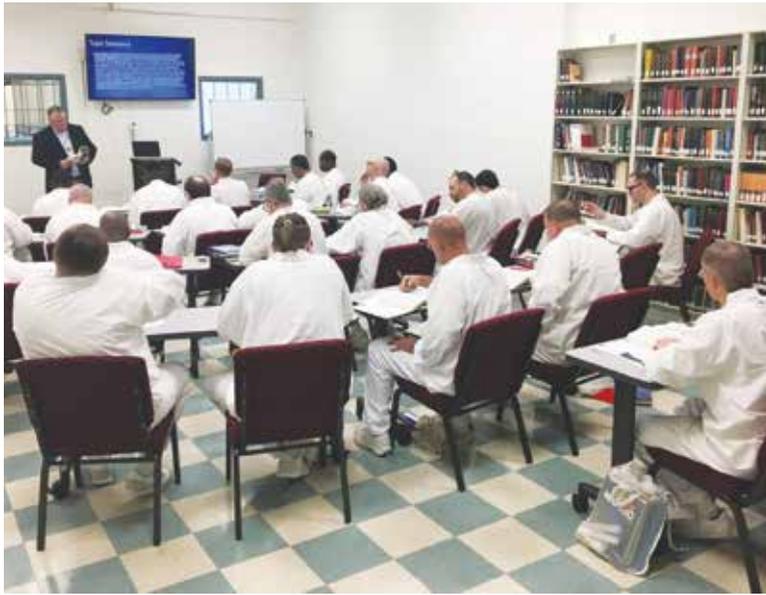
HEBER SPRINGS – Mountain Top Cowboy Church, Heber Springs, will host a one-day women's conference at 9 a.m., Sept. 28.

The theme for the event is

Come, Drink from the Well, and features Lora Jones, author of "Song of a Wounded Heart: Regaining Hope and Trust After Personal Tragedy." In 2004, Jones lost her hus-

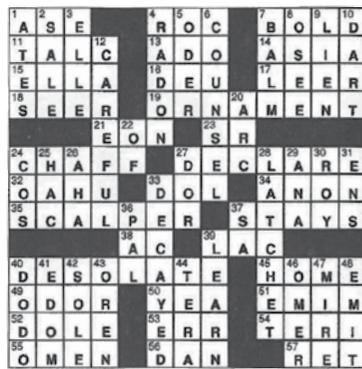
band and two children. Today, Jones encourages others to renew their faith in God amid difficult circumstances.

For more information, email rlthomas@tcworks.net.



PRISON CLASSES BEGIN – A new prison seminary at the Arkansas Department of Correction's maximum security Varner Unit in Lincoln County launched Aug. 28 with a 25-member class. The seminary program, sponsored by Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary, will allow students to earn a four-year college degree free of charge. The Arkansas Baptist Foundation administers the fund that provides support for the prison seminary program. The program does not receive any state funds. *Facebook photo via Dub Byers*

See the ABN crossword, page 9



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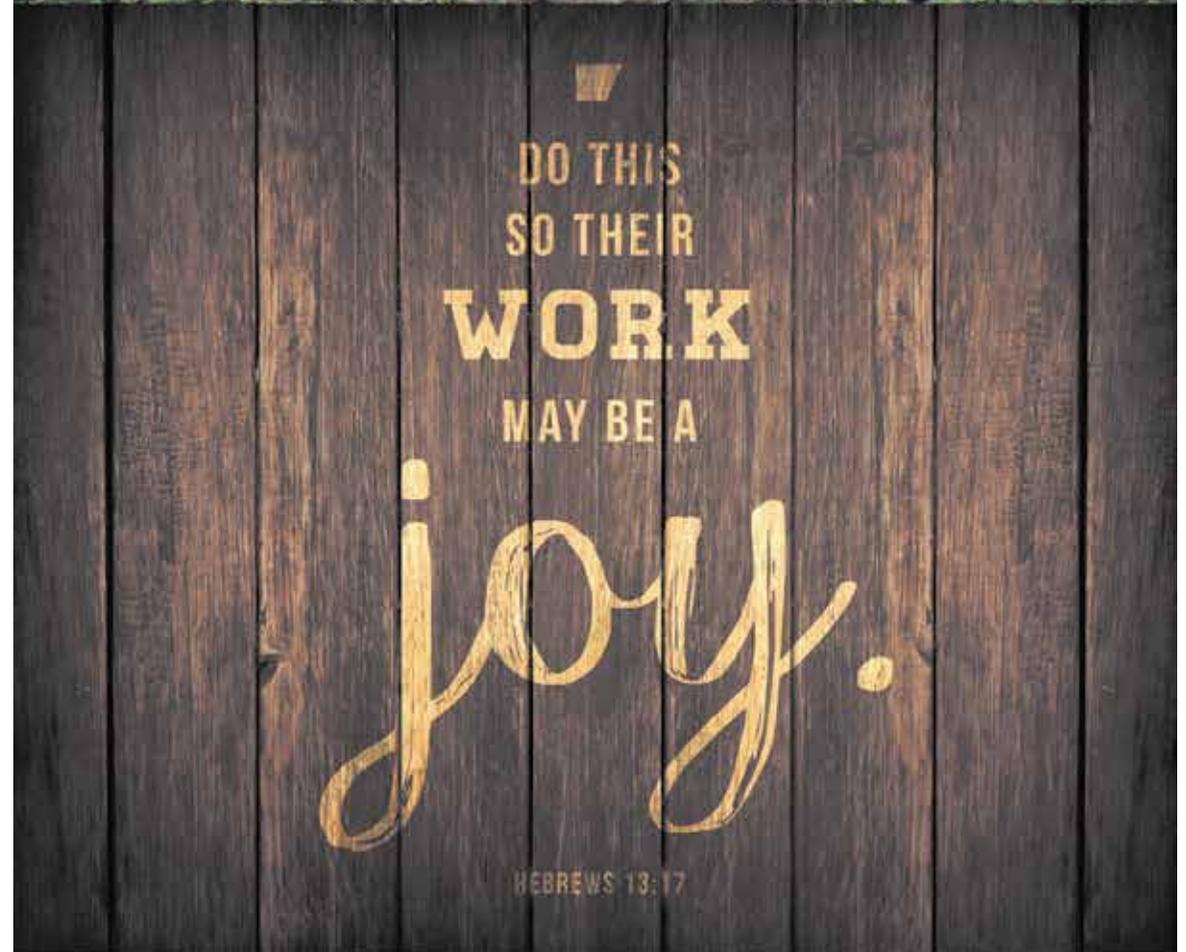
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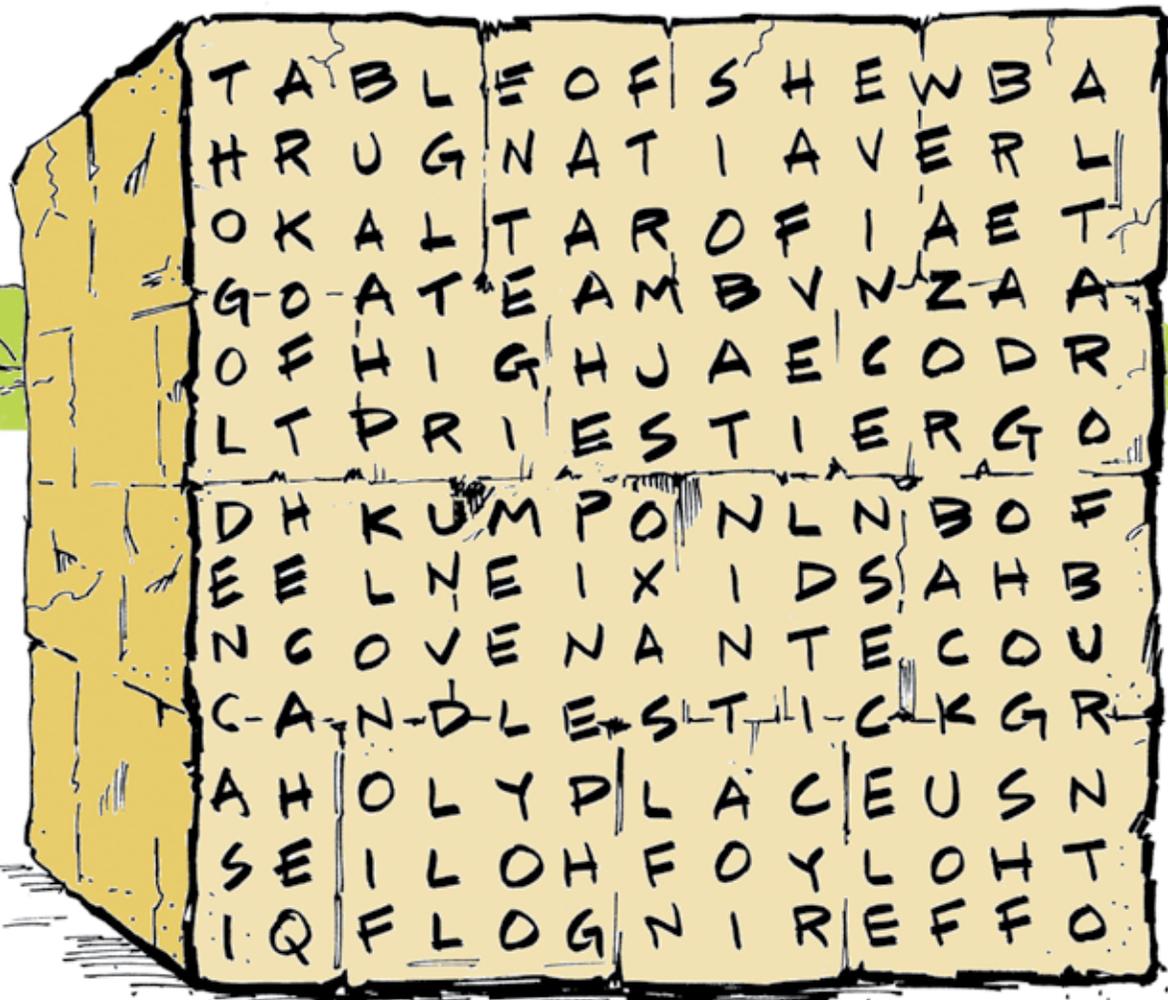
Gospel Games

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

2 Timothy 2:5 (CSB)

TEMPLE WORD SEARCH

Help Solomon find these items that were planned for the temple.



Across

1. Of an enzyme (suffix)
4. Huge bird of prey
7. "But I beseech you, that I may not be ____"
- (2 Corinthians 10:2)
11. Used to make powder
13. "Why make ye this ____ and weep?" (Mark 5:39)
14. "all they which dwelt in ____ heard the word" (Acts 19:10)
15. Old-fashioned feminine name
16. Torah tome (abbr.)
17. Malicious look
18. "for he that is now called a Prophet was...called a ____"
- (1 Samuel 9:9)
19. "as for the beauty of his ____ he set it in majesty"
- (Ezekiel 7:20)
21. A very long time
23. Yr. in school
24. "The ungodly are...like the ____ which the wind driveth

- away" (Psalm 1:4)
27. "I shall not die, but live, and ____ the works of the Lord" (Psalm 118:17)
32. Hawaiian island
33. U.S. currency (abbr.)
34. Shortly
35. You may meet one outside a stadium
37. ____ the course (pl.)
38. A necessity in Aug.?
39. Body of water (Fr.)
40. "And he dwelleth in ____ cities" (Job 15:28)
45. "My old Kentucky ____"
49. Scent
50. "____ though I walk through the valley" (Psalm 23:4)
51. An early inhabitant of Moab (Deuteronomy 2)
52. Former senator from Kansas
53. If human, one does
54. Feminine nickname
55. Sign
56. Son of Jacob
57. Prepare flax

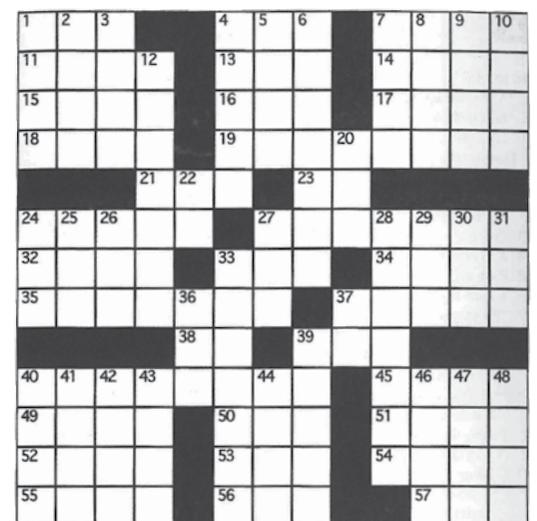
Down

1. To become (suffix, pl.)
2. White ____
3. French pronoun
4. Gaseous element
5. Central European river
6. "And Saul asked ____ of God" (1 Samuel 14:37)
7. "Is there no ____ in Gilead?" (Jeremiah 8:22)
8. "in ____, I will call them my people" (Romans 9:25)
9. Right to ownership
10. "Till a ____ strike through his liver" (Proverbs 7:23)
12. "Be ____ for nothing" (Philippians 4:6)
20. Circle part
22. Preposition
24. Aka Romaine (lettuce)
25. Horse for hire (var.)
26. Exclamation of surprise
27. Manasseh's children dwelt here (1 Chronicles 7:29)
28. "whose shoe's ____ I am not worthy to unloose" (John 1:27)

29. Collection of anecdotes
30. Rogers
31. Printer's measures
33. "I will raise up the ____ places thereof" (Isaiah 44:26)
36. Chum
37. Continent (abbr.)
39. "That thou mayest ____ to fear the Lord" (Deuteronomy 14:23)
40. "after him was Eleazar the son of ____" (2 Samuel 23:9)
41. The land of Esau
42. Only
43. A son of Jerahmeel (1 Chronicles 2:25)
44. One trillion (comb. form)
46. Ancient Hebrew dry measure
47. "I sink deep in ____" (Psalm 69:2)
48. Discharge

Crossword by
Barbour Publishing, Inc.

AB Crossword puzzle



Crossword answer, page 8

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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

Charles Kenneth "Sandy" Sandifer, 91, of Arkadelphia, died Aug. 20.



Sandifer taught biology and life sciences at Arkansas A&M College in Pine Bluff and at Ouachita Baptist University in Arkadelphia. He served as a deacon of First Baptist Church, Arkadelphia, and worked with the Red River Baptist Association disaster relief.

He was preceded in death by his parents, two sisters and two sons.

Sandifer is survived by his wife, a son, a daughter, six grandchildren, six great-grandchildren and three great-great-grandchildren.

A funeral was held Aug. 25 at First Baptist Church, Arkadelphia.

Veda Isabell Williams Coleman, 98, of Little Rock, died Aug. 28.



Coleman was married to Clyde Coleman, a Baptist pastor for 60 years in Arkansas and Texas. She worked as the social services director at Conway Memorial Hospital for 25 years.

She was preceded in death by

her parents, five brothers and two sisters.

Coleman is survived by her son, her daughter, six grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren.

A memorial service was held Sept. 4 at Crystal Hill Baptist Church, Little Rock.

Church life

First Baptist Church, Harrison, will host a revival at 10 a.m., Sunday, Sept. 15, and 6:30 p.m., Sunday-Wednesday, Sept. 15-18. Thomas Hammond, executive director of the Georgia Baptist Mission Board, will be the guest speaker.

Three-Rivers Biker Church, Gamaliel, will host the 10th annual Children's Home Benefit starting at 10 a.m., Saturday, Sept. 21. Activities will include a bounce house, door prizes, food and silent auction. For more information, contact Bill McMeechan at 870-405-3503.

First Baptist Church, Curtis, will host guest speaker Don Piper, author of "90 Minutes in Heaven," at 6 p.m., Sunday, Sept. 22. For more information, call 501-842-4933.

Zion Hill Baptist Church, Cabot, will host a revival Sunday-Wednesday, Sept. 29-Oct. 2. Services begin at 6:30 p.m. each night.

Milestones

Cletus and Betty Hall of Freeman Heights Baptist Church, Berryville, celebrated their 80th wedding anniversary on July 22. In 2018, the Family Council, a Little Rock-based conservative group, named the Halls as the third longest married couple in Arkansas, and they were honored by Gov. Asa Hutchinson.

Jamie Staley celebrated 10 years as pastor of First Baptist Church, Crossett, Sunday, Aug. 25.

The Hispanic ministry of **First Baptist Church, Malvern**, will celebrate 15 years of ministry Friday-Saturday, Sept. 13-14, in the Family Life Center.

Dennis Wilkins will retire as associational missionary

of North Pulaski Baptist Association. The association will host an appreciation at 6 p.m., Monday, Sept. 23, at North Hills Baptist Church, Sherwood.

Millcreek Baptist Church, Hot Springs, will celebrate its 70 years of ministry at 10 a.m., Sunday, Sept. 29. Frank Pfenengar, former pastor of the church, will speak. A celebration meal will be served at noon. A slide show, music and recognitions will follow after lunch in the sanctuary.

On the move

Ernest DeSoto is serving as associational missionary for Central Baptist Association. DeSoto previously served as associational missionary in Liberty Baptist Association.

John Dicus is serving as youth pastor of Freeman Heights Baptist Church, Berryville.

Rick Hyde has resigned as bi-vocational pastor of First Baptist Church, Curtis, to

return to supply preaching and interim pastor ministry.

Billy Kite has resigned as pastor of Military Road Baptist Church, Jacksonville. He and his wife, Ruby, are retiring and moving to Sunshine Retirement Community in Hot Springs.

Sean Milliken is serving as pastor of First Baptist Church, Valley Springs.

Classifieds

PASTOR

Pulaski Heights Baptist Church, Little Rock, Arkansas, seeks an experienced, ordained pastor to serve as the church's full-time senior pastor. Qualifications should include a degree from an accredited seminary program and service in ministerial work; experience in church or organizational administration/operation is desired. Please send name, cover letter and resume with references to jcllee3278@yahoo.com.

Ebenezer Baptist Church, El Dorado, AR, in search of a **full-time pastor**. Send resumes to Pastor Search Committee, 1942 N. Wyatt Drive, El Dorado, AR, 71730 or e-mail to myebcchurch@yahoo.com. Resumes will be accepted until November 1.

Lexa Baptist Church is searching for a

full-time pastor. Please send your resume to PO Box 189, Lexa, AR 72355.

Wheatley Baptist Church, Wheatley, AR, is searching for a **bi-vocational or full-time pastor**. Send resumes to sharonlng59@gmail.com or PO Box 217, Wheatley, AR 72392.

FBC, Camden, is seeking **full-time senior pastor**. Send resume to FBCCamdenPSC@gmail.com.

In search of a **full-time or bi-vocational pastor** for Shepherd Hill Baptist Church located south of Pine Bluff, AR. Send resumes to CBrown@next-wire.com.

First Baptist Church, Dumas, AR, in search for a **pastor**. Send resume to PSC, 200 East Waterman, Dumas, Arkansas 71639.

Belview Baptist in Melbourne, AR, is seeking a **full-time pastor**. Send resumes to mybel-

view@gmail.com.

Portland Baptist Church, Portland, Arkansas, is seeking a **full-time pastor**. Letter/resume to ronmiller47@gmail.com or Ron Miller, 251 Keller Bend Rd., Wilmot, AR 71676.

Rector First Baptist Church seeks **full-time senior pastor**. Send resume to rectorfirst@gmail.com or PO Box 197, Rector, AR 72461.

Seeking **bi-vocational pastor** for a small, rural Southern Baptist church in Union, Arkansas. Please send resume or information to Mt. Zion Baptist Church, c/o Janet Yancey, PO Box 258, Oxford, AR 72565 OR email to janet.yancey@melbourneschools.org.

Archview Baptist Church is seeking a **bi-vocational pastor**. Mail resume to 12610 Arch St., Little Rock, AR 72206.

First Baptist Church, Gillham, is seeking a

pastor. Please send resume to First Baptist Church of Gillham, PO Box 150, Gillham, AR 71841.

OTHER STAFF POSITIONS

Oak Grove Baptist Church in Springdale, AR, is seeking a **part-time worship leader** to plan and lead blended services. Contact us at ogbchoir@gmail.com or PO Box 8109, Springdale, AR 72766.

Harlan Park Baptist Church, Conway, is seeking a **part-time worship leader** with ability to coordinate and plan worship, lead praise team and overall music ministry. Great spot for young worship leader to gain experience. Please submit resume with references to garynmitchell@hotmail.com or call 501-269-5536.

FBC, Lepanto, seeking a **full-time youth**

pastor. Salary and parsonage provided. Please send your resume to kyle@fbclepanto.com.

MISCELLANEOUS

Pews for sale: We have 15 14-ft pews and 3 12-ft pews. Lighter wood finish, \$100 each. Brumley Baptist in Conway. Contact Billy Crow: 501-253-4435 or pastorbillycrow@gmail.com

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SEPTEMBER 15, 2019

Ephesians 2:1-3 paints a completely hopeless situation. We were dead because of our trespasses and sin. We lived the way of the world, which is ruled by Satan whose spirit influences many to be disobedient.

Something amazing happens in verse 4, “But God...” D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, pastor of London’s Westminster Chapel for nearly 30 years, said, “These two words [‘But God’] in and of themselves, in a sense contain the whole of the gospel. The gospel tells us what God has done, God’s intervention; it is something that comes entirely from outside us and displays to us that wondrous and amazing and astonishing work of God.” Salvation is something God does in Christ, not us (Eph. 2:8).

What did God do? He made us alive with Christ (Eph. 2:5). We were dead, but He made us alive. He also raised us up with Christ (Eph. 2:6). “Raised up” is important. We are raised up “from” our sin and death “to” a new life in Christ. God

also seated us with Christ in the heavens (Eph. 2:6). God considers us worthy and has destined us to be positioned with Christ in heaven when we arrive there.

God does all this because He loves us and wants to “display the immeasurable riches of His grace through His kindness to us in Christ Jesus” (Eph. 2:7). Paul expounded on God’s grace (Eph. 2:8). God didn’t have to save us. He loved us

and wanted to. This is called grace, and it is what saved us. Grace is a gift from God. It is not earned or deserved. Even our faith, the conduit of

grace, is a gift from God. There is no part of salvation that can be attributed to us. We are entirely God’s workmanship (Eph. 2:10).

Salvation results in good works (Eph. 2:10). The Reformers used to say, “It is faith alone that justifies, but faith that justifies can never be alone.” Faith in Christ is always accompanied with good works at home, at work, at school, at church, in your city and everywhere.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Resurrected

EPHESIANS 2:1-10 (HCSB)

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

The key to contentment

PHILIPPIANS 4:10-20 (HCSB)

More: More food and drinks; more opportunities and success; more salary and benefits; more square footage in our homes; more garages for more boats, cars and trucks; more time off to play with more toys; more gadgets and gizmos. Advertisers attempt to capitalize off of this discontent, “Don’t settle for this when you can have this” or “Why settle for one when you can have two?”

The Apostle Paul said, “I have learned the secret [of being content]” (Phil. 4:12).

Contentment in the Greek New Testament is defined as “sufficient in oneself.” The Stoic philosophers of Paul’s day taught that contentment was self-sufficiency. For them contentment was a matter of personal will. Paul did not teach self-sufficiency, “Not that we are competent in ourselves, but our competence is from God” (2 Cor. 3:5).

Paul elevated contentment to a higher level, “Christ-sufficiency.” Christian contentment is believing that Christ is sufficient for every need. Because he had spiritual resources in Christ, Paul could

say, “I can accept all things;” “I can do all things,” and “I have all things” (Phil. 4:11, 13, 18).

Contentment, for Paul, was not complacency based on a shallow philosophical idea that provided a false sense of peace. Paul had to learn how to be content. The word “learn” is from a Greek word which means “to learn from experience.” It is where we get our word for “disciple” and “discipleship.” Contentment is learned; it is part of our discipleship.

Paul had to learn to trust in God’s providence, strength and promises. In His providence, God caused

the church of Philippi to be concerned for Paul’s needs (Phil. 4:10). God’s strength was not only a resource for Paul’s contentment; it was also the secret (Phil. 4:12-13). Paul had the promise God would meet his every need (Phil. 4:19).

Warren Wiersbe said, “God has not promised to supply your greeds.” He does promise to meet our needs. We should include learning to be content in our ongoing discipleship.

SEPTEMBER 22, 2019

Ephesians 2:11-22 describes hostility between Jews and Gentiles that went back hundreds of years. A Jew would not enter Palestine without first shaking the Gentile dust from his sandals. If a Jewish man or woman married a Gentile, that person’s family would have a funeral because that person would be declared dead to his or her religion, family and God. The Jews called Gentiles the “uncircumcised” (Eph. 2:11). This was a derogatory term.

Paul’s distaste for such language is seen in his words “by those called ‘the circumcised’” (Eph. 2:11). It literally means “by the so-called circumcision” (Eph. 2:11).

The Gentiles were alienated spiritually. They were without the Messiah (Eph. 2:12). They had no messianic hope of a Savior. They only had empty promises from pagan deities and philosophies of men. They were excluded from citizenship of Israel (Eph. 2:12). Scripture makes it clear that God had dealt with the pagan nations, and they rejected Him. They were also alienated from the covenant promises of God (Eph. 2:12). These promises would be extended to

anyone who would believe in Him, and they would receive the promise of eternal life.

In verse 13, Paul began to describe the beautiful picture of reconciliation that is possible through Christ’s death on the cross. Paul said Christ “tore down the dividing wall of hostility” (Eph. 2:14). This is an allusion to the wall that separated the Court of the Gentiles from the interior Jewish part of the temple. Jesus’

death on the cross tore down the wall of hostility and brought Jews and Gentiles together (Eph. 2:14-16). Through

Christ’s death on the cross, the hostility between the Jew and the Gentile has been put to death (Eph. 2:16). In reconciliation, Christ created a “new man” of the two, and it resulted in both being at peace with each other (Eph. 2:13-15, 17).

Reconciliation makes no reference to nationality, race, skin color or gender. With Christ, the only identity that matters is identity in Him. There is only one Christianity. There is only one Lord, and He only has one Church. In Christ, we are all one people.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Reconciled

EPHESIANS 2:11-22 (HCSB)

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

Godly contentment

1 TIMOTHY 6:6-11, 17-19 (HCSB)

I looked in my rearview mirror and saw the left lane was clear, so I turned on my blinker and proceeded to enter the lane. Then I heard another driver laying on the horn. I swerved back into my lane. I failed to account for my blind spot. One of the biggest blind spots for Christians and churches is materialism. Possessions can give us a false sense of security and can lead us crashing into the depths of sin.

Paul said, “Godliness with contentment is a great gain” (1 Tim. 6:6). “Great gain” does not

translate into material gain. The context teaches us that the false teachers in Ephesus were using religion for material gain. The gain of which Paul spoke is “more godliness.” There is a huge difference between using godliness as a means to an end and using godliness as an end in itself.

Paul described the futility of materialism, “We brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out” (1 Tim. 6:7). There is an old proverb that

says, “Burial shrouds have no pockets.” You can’t take it with you. Paul said we should be content with the basic needs for living (1 Tim. 6:8). Jesus advised us, “Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you” (Matt. 6:33). Most of the things we worry about, collect and think we need end up in a storage unit or a yard sale.

Craving possessions and money can lead to our destruction (1 Tim. 6:9-10). Craving more possessions can

cause us to wander from our faith and lead us into sorrow. Many possessions require time and energy. They can lead us away from God, our family and our church. I knew a man who got a new boat. He became a new name on the absentee list at church. Careful, it doesn’t take long for possessions to take possession of us.

Paul’s counter to materialism is for us to set our hope on God and store up riches in heaven (1 Tim. 6:17-19).

Featured commentary writer



Gerald Nash

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



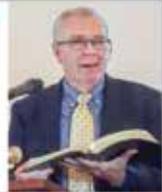
Inside:

- ABSC Executive Board meets Aug. 13
- Ark. Right to Life brings 'Viable' play to state
- Planned Parenthood forfeits federal funding
- Moore named ABSC prayer ambassador
- ABN Board members profiled

Renaissance man

ABN Sunday school commentary writer Gerald Nash uses myriad passions for God's glory

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Pope County casino process '3 ring circus'

Margaret Colson
Arkansas Baptist News

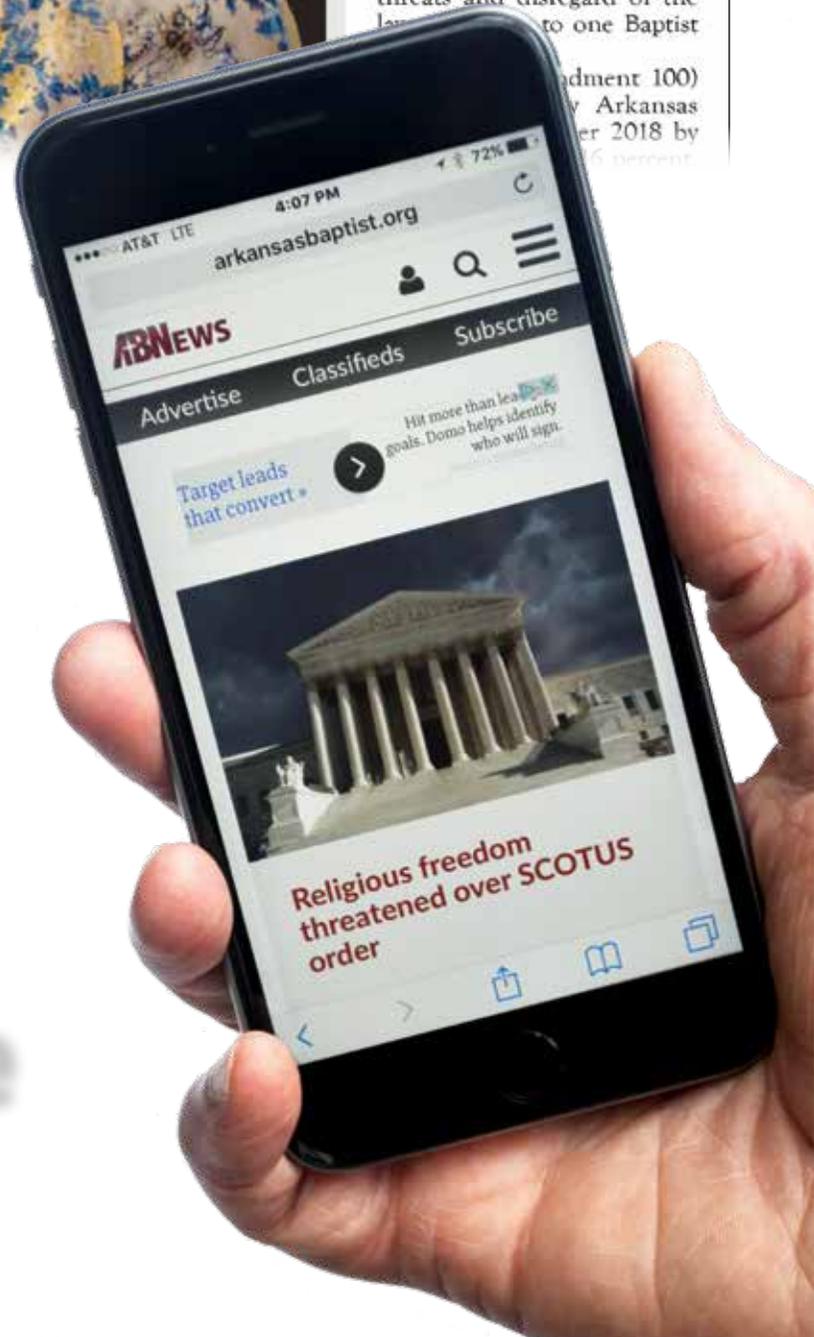
POPE COUNTY — "A three-ring circus" has come to town, complete with lawsuits and alleged closed-door meetings, threats and disregard of the law, according to one Baptist

(Ark. Stat. § 10-2-100)
Arkansas Baptist News
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