

BAPTIST TRUMPET

www.baptisttrumpet.com

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF BAPTIST MISSIONARY ASSOCIATION OF ARKANSAS

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Number 28

How to Pray
Matthew 6:10-13

P PRAISE for who He is, for what He has done. OUR FATHER WHO ART IN HEAVEN, HALLOWED BE THY NAME.

R REPENT of sins I have committed, of commands I have neglected, AND FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS, AS WE FORGIVE OUR DEBTORS.

A ASK for the needs of others, for my needs. GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD, AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION, BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL.

Y YIELD my will to God's will, my agenda to God's agenda for me. THY KINGDOM COME, THY WILL BE DONE ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN. FOR THINE IS THE KINGDOM, AND THE POWER, AND THE GLORY, FOR EVER, AMEN.

PRAYER FOR OUR ASSOCIATION

BMA
BAPTIST MISSIONARY ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

Praying for Our Association (Part 6)

By Larry Barker, Director • Healthy Church Solutions

Executive Editor's Note: This is the final article in a series of six articles focused on "Prayer for Our Association." (See the March 6, 13, 20, 27 & April 3 issues for the other articles.) The Baptist Trumpet is partnering with Healthy Church Solutions and inviting your church to intentionally set aside time to pray for our association before the national meeting.

We are utilizing the PRAY acronym, which we often use as a tool to practice the posture and language Jesus modeled when asked to teach His disciples how to pray (Matt. 6:10-13). On Sunday, April

14, we are asking churches to set aside time before, during or after service to finish out the acronym by participating in Ask and Yield.

Instead of starting with Ask, like we are so often too prone to do, we've spent the last week fixing our eyes on God in Praise and adoration. Praise helps us to see Him rightly. We've also taken the time to Repent because we see ourselves rightly through His eyes. This week, we'll concentrate on three main areas of Asking or crying out:

- Asking God to move in **our association** at the national meeting and this coming year, in His power and sovereignty and through His grace alone.

- We pray for our missionaries, church planters and their families around the world — for God to sustain and protect them and for gospel doors to be opened.

- We ask for unity in the association to move forward on God's agenda for His name's sake.

- We pray for new laborers to the harvest.

- We pray for new opportunities in unreached areas, for the gospel to go forth and for the lost to be saved.

No issue next week due to the BMA of America annual meeting

Our next issue will be April 24.

MOVING with Ministers and Staff

This is only a news column, and the publishing of a person's availability should not be considered a recommendation by the Trumpet. To view previous listings from this column, visit our website at www.BaptistTrumpet.com.

Soda Baptist Church of Livingston, Texas is seeking a full-time pastor. Resumes may be sent to SodabaptistPastorcomm.2024@gmail.com or Soda Baptist Church, Attn: Pastor Search Committee, 8135 Highway 190 E., Livingston, Texas 77351.

- We pray to be known more and more as a praying association.

- Asking God to move in **our local church**.

- We pray that the pastor will be a healthy leader so he can lead a healthy church, and for protection and guidance for him and his family.

- We pray that the Word of God will be fully and boldly proclaimed.

- We pray for discipleship to be part of the church DNA and for all believers to be discipling and serving both pre-believers and other believers.

- We pray to be known in the community as a unified and praying church.

- Asking God to move in **our lives as individuals**.

- We pray that our intimacy with Christ is what it should be.

- We pray that we first choose to be with Jesus over doing for Him.

- We pray that we are disciples who make disciples.

- We pray that we are bold witnesses for the gospel.

- We pray that we are humble servants to others and use our gifts in the body, as we are called to do.

- Last, we Yield to God's will and sovereignty over all we ask and in every situation we are walking through. We don't need a lot of words here. It's laying it all down at the cross in a spirit of submission. We saw Jesus do this in the Garden, and God gave Him the composure needed to go all the way to Calvary.

See PRAY, Page 4

BMA of America Ministers & Leaders Photo Directory

colorcraft CHURCH DIRECTORIES

BAPTIST TRUMPET

Plan to Get Your Photo Taken At the National Meeting

By Jeff Herring, Executive Editor

The *Baptist Trumpet* is partnering with Color Craft Church Directories (colorcraft.com) to produce a BMA Pastors' and Leaders digital photo directory. The Color Craft representative, Mark Roddy, will set up his studio services at the 2024 BMA of America meeting next week at Chateau on the Lake Resort in Branson, Mo. to photograph all BMA ministers, pastors, departmental directors, music, youth and education directors (and also a photo with their spouse, if desired).

Everyone who stops by and has their photograph taken for the directory will receive an 8x10 retouched copy of your photo. After the meeting, we will be able to provide a mobile digital directory that will be available at BaptistTrumpet.com.

In addition to getting your photo taken, you will complete a sitting card that includes contact information so we can reach out to update or add your

See PHOTO, Page 4



NAIA Announces New Policy On Transgender Athlete Participation

By Terry Kimbrow, President • Central Baptist College

As the current president of the American Midwest Conference (AMC), the athletic conference in which CBC has competed for many years, I have been privileged to represent CBC and the AMC on the Council of Presidents (COP) at the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) national meetings every spring and fall. This policy revision has been in the works for two years. The previous NAIA policy mirrored the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) (as is common for some policies), which only applied to post-season play, leaving us vulnerable without a policy for regular conference games.

When the NCAA's updated transgender policy was released in 2022, I knew I could not support anything close to those directives. The COP reviewed several "position statements" over the past two years but could not reach a consensus. The policy we approved April 8 allows CBC to continue our mission of "transforming lives through the integration of Christian faith and academic excellence in a Christ-centered environment." I'm

See POLICY, Page 9




CENTRAL BAPTIST COLLEGE
PROFILE

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Terry Kimbrow
President



Summer Classes

Central Baptist College offers online courses for two 5-week sessions and one 10-week session for summer 2024:

- **Summer Session 1, May 20-June 20 — Payment Deadline May 17**
- **Summer Session 2, June 24-July 25 — Payment Deadline June 21**
- **Summer Session 3, May 20-July 25 — Payment Deadline May 17**

Summer courses are available for both current and non-current CBC students. A schedule of courses, tuition, fees and payment information can be found at cbc.edu/calendar. To start the application process, visit cbc.edu/apply.

PACE Program

For adults with a full-time job that need a convenient and flexible college option, the next registration deadline is **Monday, April 22**. Classes begin April 29 and are offered in-class, online or in a hybrid option.

With eight enrollment periods per year and five-week courses, working adults always have an opportunity to get started. Take advantage of the \$500 BMAA Grant (which applies to all students who attend a BMAA church), the Ministry Tuition Grant, student referral grant or the Veterans Tuition Grant. For a full list of 2024 course deadlines, visit cbc.edu/calendar.

Visit cbc.edu/pace to apply or learn what PACE can do for you. If you have questions, contact Corley Shumaker at cshumaker@cbc.edu or (501) 205-8940.

Traditional Student Fall Semester

For traditional high school students and college transfer students, now is the time to apply for Fall 2024. Scholarships are still available! To schedule a personal campus visit, go to cbc.edu/visit, where students can also take a virtual campus visit or get more information about the value of Central Baptist College.

Once new students complete the easy application and are accepted, each student will receive a scholarship award package to review and accept.

Until July 1, all students interested in applying can take advantage of our free application fee. Visit cbc.edu/apply to apply or contact our Admissions office at admissions@cbc.edu or (501) 329-6873.



Sports News
By Erik Holth

Softball

• **Conway, April 2** — Stepping out of American Midwest Conference (AMC) play for a midweek in-state contest, CBC took on the Royals of Ecclesias College (EC) at City of Colleges Park. CBC (20-14) run-ruled EC (1-5) in both games, beating them 9-1 in six innings in game one before shutting them out 8-0 in five innings in game two.

• **Conway, April 5** — Looking to start their AMC home schedule off with a bang, CBC hosted the Trojans of Hannibal-LaGrange University (HLGU) at City of Colleges Park. CBC (20-14, 6-0 AMC) run-ruled HLGU (3-29, 1-9 AMC) in both contests by scores of 18-2 and 12-2, grabbing sole possession of first place in the AMC for the first time this season.

• **Conway, April 6** — Sitting in sole possession of first place in the AMC, CBC hosted the Spartans of Missouri Baptist (MBU) at City of Colleges Park. CBC (21-15, 7-1 AMC) earned a split with MBU (25-9, 10-2 AMC), dropping game one 3-2 in eight innings before winning game two 5-3.

Baseball

• **North Little Rock, April 6** — Looking to run their winning streak to four in a row, CBC took on the Hornets of Harris-Stowe State (HSSU) in an AMC Conference Doubleheader at DeSalvo Memorial Stadium. CBC (25-9, 7-3 AMC) took care of business, sweeping HSSU (1-20, 0-11 AMC) by scores of 6-3 and 12-5.

• **North Little Rock, April 7** — Looking to secure the sweep in their weekend AMC series, CBC hosted the Hornets of HSSU at DeSalvo Memorial Stadium. CBC (26-9, 9-3 AMC) trailed 9-1 through five and a half innings to HSSU (1-21, 0-12 AMC), but fought back to win 12-10 and complete the sweep.

Men's Golf

• **Mountain Home, April 2** — Looking to jump up several spots, CBC played the final round at the Battle at Big Creek. CBC shot the second lowest round of the day with a total of 598, 20 shots behind the winners from William Woods. Individually, **Kitsakon Jairak** and **Jakub Slapal** both tied for fifth, with a total score of 148 after Jairak shot a final round 72 and Slapal shot a final round 73. **Leopold Maes** jumped up 11 spots after closing with a 72, while individual **Suraprat** See **SPORTS, Page 4**



Student Ministry Matters

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Dan Carson
Director

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Making Room for Others

When I came to Calvary Baptist Church of Fayetteville seven and a half years ago, I quickly learned that this was a church that wanted to share with others what God had provided. They were allowing a local community ministry called Potter's House to utilize our Family Life Center for Wet Cement (a preschool/mother's day out program) and Academy (an afterschool tutoring program). Our ministry assistant handled most of the contacts with their leadership, but after her departure, I stepped in to facilitate communication and leadership from the church staff. During my first years at Calvary, we also started helping a year-round Camp War Eagle program called Ozone, which is a program for those attending Camp War Eagle in the summer months to stay connected throughout the year.

We get several requests for these types of activities and have a large gym/education space that many would like to use. During my time here, we have even had a Classical Conversations school use our campus for a year. That one did not go as smoothly so we had to end their invitation. Not every partnership is going to be a home run, but it is worth the time and effort to share your God-given resources with the people of your community. If your church is considering allowing others to use your facilities, it is important to have some things locked in as you step into a partnership relationship. We are not experts, but perhaps these things will help you as you consider the requests that come your way:

• **What does your church constitution say about the subject?** If the request goes against the outlined rules of order for the church, it is important to stop right there. Your church constitution was established for a reason. If it needs to be adjusted, then that is something to consider, but as a general rule, those guidelines were prayerfully considered and outlined.

• **Does the organization share your vision for ministry?** Both Potter's House and Camp War Eagle are designed to help local families as they invest in their children. We are big fans of both groups. Is every piece of their doctrine the same as our church? No, but we agree on the big stuff. While we may not have a huge family, children's ministry or student ministry at Calvary, our donation of meeting space for these groups allows us to regularly give to our community. That is a good thing.

• **Do you have a point person who can serve as a liaison between the group and the church?** If you want to find success in this type of relationship, you need to have someone who can watch over this partnership. At Calvary, that is me. Is it a headache at times? Yes, but I wouldn't trade it. We have the space and resources, and it is important for us to be good stewards of God's provision. This person needs to be willing to communicate with both groups (the church and ministry partner) equally. This type of communication can stifle some of the tension that can arise.

• **Be clear about what they are responsible for.** We don't charge the ministries that meet on our campus. However, they have agreed to make sure that the building they use is clean. Our janitorial situation changed in the past few years and our partners were more than willing to help out in this area. If you are going to ask them to reimburse you for utilities through a donation or other financial responsibilities, make sure that it is clear before things start.

Sharing space with another group can be a challenge, but a rewarding one. Partner ministries can help you reach out in ways you may not be equipped to do by yourself. I know our partnership with Potter's House and Camp War Eagle hits its high point each fall as we host a Fall Fun Fest together. Prayerfully consider how God might lead your church to partner with others outside of your congregation.



HEALTHY CHURCH SOLUTIONS

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LARRY BARKER, By Larry Barker, Regional Coordinator
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Do We Really Need Systems?

When you talk about designing and developing systems in a local church, it can sometimes be like opening the proverbial can of worms. Do you really need systems if you are following Jesus and obeying His Word? Jesus said that if you are going to build a house, you should consider what foundation you will build it on. He also said if you are going to build a tower, first consider the cost. If you do not think you need God, that would make you very foolish, but if you think systems could not help you and your ministry, that is unwise. The tension between trusting in systems too much and ignoring the need for systems completely is real.

Healthy systems lead to healthy churches, and healthy churches

have healthy systems. In *Atomic Habits*, James Clear stated, “We don’t rise to the level of our goals, we fall to the level of our systems.” God is a God of systems,

having created the solar system (Gen. 1:1-8) and having created man (Psalm 139:14-15). Your body has a circulatory, nervous, respiratory and reproductive system, just to name a few. If one system fails, you can find yourself in quite a predicament. When your systems are functioning well, you call yourself healthy. Each system has an essential task to complete in a specific manner that leads toward health.

Why are systems so important? So the rest of the body (individual and corporate) can continue to function properly. Systems rely and depend on one another, and the systems your church puts in place are the essential processes that will help your church remain healthy and give it the ability to multiply. The healthier the system, the healthier the church, and the healthier the leaders, the healthier the systems. In *No Silver Bullets*, Daniel Im stated that systems are “A group of related parts that move or work together!” What systems do you have in place for outreach, assimilation, spiritual growth, member care, finance, wor-

ship, etc.?

A system is a well-thought-out process, written down and spread around. Depending on how you decide to develop or number them, your church can have eight or nine major systems that accomplish (or diminish) the work of God. Systems answer questions like:

- What results do you want to achieve?
- What are the steps needed to achieve those results?
- Who will ensure that those results are being achieved?
- How will you measure success?

Values drive practices, and your practices determine your results. What is the purpose of having that system, and what checklist do you need to develop for it to be successful?



There is a warning label here that needs to be properly applied. It is easy to always be straining and striving to devise new methods, new programs,

new strategies and new systems to advance the gospel and build up your church. Remember, you are God’s method, and while you are looking for better methods, God is looking for better men and women. Always begin with the spiritual dynamic of godly individuals who are people of prayer and are thirsty for Him (Psalm 63). The Holy Spirit does not flow through methods. He flows through His people who are surrendered to Him, ready to obey Him and will do what He asks them to do.

What can good systems do for you? Your outreach system teaches your people how to connect with and reach people who are far from God. Your assimilation system welcomes those you are reaching when they arrive at your Bible study, worship or event by showing them how to connect and get involved (i.e., next steps). This system enables you to sustain all the relational capital you have worked hard to build. Your discipleship system helps disciples see the next logical, sequential steps in following Jesus

and how to continue to grow. Your financial system teaches biblical stewardship and manages funds for kingdom work with integrity.

Your worship system seeks to connect worshippers to God by purposely helping them focus on Him and invite His manifold presence in. Your church needs to take a hard look at developing systems that enable you to care more effectively for the people God has already given you, while remaining focused on reaching those who are still far from Him. In *What’s Best Next?*, Matt Periman stated, “The result of management without leadership is that you will never get there!” Systems do not accomplish, on their own, what you are striving to accomplish — people do. You need the right people in the right places of responsibility.

Well-thought-out and developed systems provide three important ingredients to your church:

- Quality — Because systems help your volunteers do it the best way possible.
- Consistency — Because systems help all your volunteers do it the same way in a unified team effort.
- Reproducibility — Because systems make it easy to teach new people what to do and puts in place good training for your teams.

That is why Gary Rohrmayer defines systems as “reproducible and interconnected processes by which the organization actualizes its values and achieves its mission.” Systems save you stress, time, energy, money and a lot of headaches.

Your church has systems, whether you realize it or not. Are your systems producing what you want them to produce? Here are a couple of questions that will help you to evaluate the effectiveness of your systems:

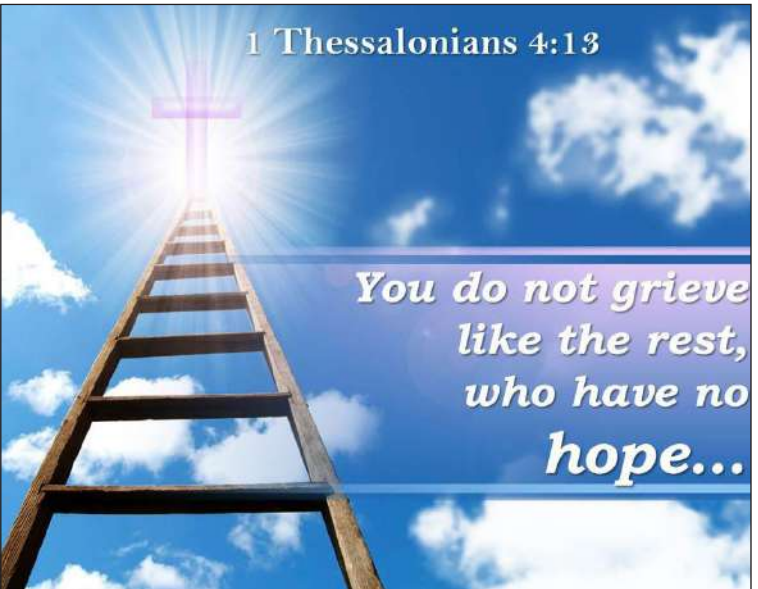
- Is it reproducible?
- How does the system contribute to the reproductive nature of the church?
- Is it interconnected?
- How does the system connect the rest of the systems needed?
- Does it aid, assist and help the other systems?
- Is it complementing or contradicting your values and the goals God is leading you to achieve?
- Are the systems mutually benefiting the other systems through healthy cooperation?

What’s next? First, I encourage you to develop and implement a prayer system that is the foundation and sustaining necessity for all your other systems. Evaluate your systems and see how you can improve them to accomplish what you believe God desires for them to accomplish. Consider systems training and reach out to us for our materials on *Prayer System* and also *Healthy Systems – Healthy Churches!*

Just Thinking...

By Dr. Tom Mitchell

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When We Grieve

I have conducted just over 1,000 funerals in my 60 years of ministry. Most were for older adults who were believers, but among those were infants, children, teens and young adults. Sadly, there were also those who had never trusted Christ as Savior. For me, those were difficult as far as attempting to console grieving families. I was just thinking about the truth that when we grieve, our Lord always cares.

• **It is natural to grieve.** Gordon Jensen captured that truth when he penned these lyrics, “God sees the tears of a brokenhearted soul, He sees your tears and hears them when they fall, God weeps along with man and takes him by the hand. Tears are a language God understands.” I know of no greater example of this than when Mary and Martha lost their brother, Lazarus to death. When Jesus came to them, the Bible tells us, “*Jesus wept*” (John 11:35 NIV.) God cares for you in your grief.

• **Grieving is not sinning.** One thing I’ve learned over the course of my long ministry is that well-intentioned people often say poorly-worded things to those who grieve. Unwittingly, they cause the heartbroken to feel they are sinning by grieving. That is not true. As He shared the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, “*Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted*” (Matt. 5:4). God doesn’t bless sin, but He certainly blesses and comforts those who grieve.

• **Our grief is temporary.** Our lives are but a vapor compared to eternity and even to the number of years humans spend on earth. Death is but a process by which the deceased is taken into eternity. While we certainly do not quickly get over the loss of loved ones in this world, when we are reunited in the presence of the Lord, our sorrows and griefs will be no more. The Psalmist wrote, “*Sing the praises of the Lord, you his faithful people; praise his holy name. For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime; weeping may stay for the night, but rejoicing comes in the morning.*” (Psalm 30:4-5).

• **The end of grieving lies ahead.** Paul wrote the Thessalonians church, “*Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope*” (I Thess. 4:13). I mentioned those for whom I had conducted funeral that were unsaved. They had no hope. Their unsaved loved ones who are left behind have no hope either. That’s why we need to share the gospel with everyone we can.

Here’s the good news! The reward of believing in Jesus as Savior and Lord is spending everlasting life with Him on the New Earth. The old way of life will have passed and a new one will never end. “*He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away*” (Rev. 21:4).

Jesus is coming again! “*He who testifies to these things says, ‘Yes, I am coming soon.’ Amen. Come, Lord Jesus*” (Rev. 22:20). Yes, indeed, the end of grieving lies ahead!



By Executive Editor
Jeff Herring

Special Emphasis 2024

For as long as I can remember, long before I became a part of the team at the *Trumpet*, this ministry has been the place people look to for the latest information. We regularly receive phone calls, emails or messages from people asking for information about something going on in the BMA. One of our goals through all we offer is to be the “Go-To” place for all information relating to BMA events, activities and more.

One way we want to continue being your “Go-To” source for all BMA News (and more) is by moving to a 12-page paper each week (as funds and content allow). We already produce a 12-page issue once a month with the BMA Global and Transforming Arkansas inserts. The additional space would allow us to include more weekly news and information to keep our readers as informed as possible. I have a stack of articles and information on my desk that never made it to publication because there wasn’t room, and they are now out of date or not relevant “news” anymore. Our goal with 12 pages would be to find a few more regular columnists to anchor the pages, and then be able to include some of the other content we don’t have room for right now. To do this for the additional 33 issues for the year will cost approximately \$12,000. We believe this is an investment in the future of this ministry.

Another area where we need funds is the expected cost of the parking lot and water system for our facilities. I don’t have the space here to detail what is going on, but the short story is we are in the process of adding a parking lot and providing water access to become self-sufficient and are not depending on the new owners of the former Temple Baptist Church (South City Church) property. The final cost is unknown now, but we expect it to be over \$50,000. This cost will be split with State Missions, so our portion is expected to be over \$25,000. We hope to raise \$10,000 toward this expected expense as part of Special Emphasis. We have already spent \$6,500 on permit and engineering fees to get approval to begin the parking lot.

The final area we are focusing on this year is upgrades to our computers. We included this expense during Special Emphasis last year but delayed purchasing the upgraded systems because of price increases and the availability of equipment that would best meet our needs. We hope to raise the extra expense to have the funds available and be able to proceed when it is time to upgrade. We are seeking to raise \$8,000 for this future expense.

That brings our total goal for Special Emphasis this year to \$30,000. Meeting these needs will help us continue to do our part to make sure we are the “Go-To” source for BMA news and so much more.

We have set up a special page where you can find graphics and flyers to help promote this special time set aside for us to raise funds for this ministry at BaptistTrumpet.com/SE2024. I invite you to check it out, and if you have not already done so, please schedule a time of prayer for this ministry with your church and prayerfully consider giving to help us meet our goal for this year.

I am excited to be going to First Baptist Church in Waldo this Sunday to share how God is working through the ministry of the *Baptist Trumpet*, and I would also love to come and share with your church. You can contact me at editor@baptisttrumpet.com, the office at (501) 565-4601 or my cell phone at (501) 425-4781.

Special Emphasis Update

Thanks to each of these churches and individuals who have given:

2024 Special Emphasis • Goal — \$30,000

Previous Balance (March 27)	\$2,144
<i>College View, Magnolia*</i>	\$5,200
Pat/Diane Spriggs	\$300
Fellowship, Bella Vista	\$1,000
Michael/Donna Gray	\$1,200
Pleasant Grove, Carlisle	\$215
Total	\$10,059

**This was previously listed incorrectly as College Ave.*

SPORTS

(Continued From Page 2)

Parepart closed with a 76 to jump up six spots, Emmanuel LaBeur jumped up two spots after shooting a 78 and Paul Gomez jumped up 11 spots after also shooting a 72.

Women’s Golf

• **Mountain Home, April 2** — Looking to move closer to a win, CBC played the final 18 holes of the Battle at Big Creek. CBC closed with a 343 to total 676 for two rounds and remained in second place, 40 shots behind the winners from Columbia. Individually, Alyssa Hagewood shot an 80 and totaled 152 for the tournament, finishing in third place by just three shots. Abby Kirby shot an 81 for a total of 166 and finished in eighth place, rising four spots in the standings. Laney Crutchfield was one spot behind Kirby after shooting an 85, and Thaylia Ramirez shot



BMA of America Annual Mtg.; April 16-18, 2024; Chateau on the Lake, Branson.

Pack-A-Pew/Pasta Sunday; April 21; 11 a.m. worship, lunch, afternoon worship; John Durham, pastor.

Bluegrass Gospel Singing; April 21, 5 p.m.; featuring The Greer Family; Union, Rosston; Joe Brown, pastor.

Mo. State Brotherhood Retreat; April 26-27; Camp Garwood.

Hot Dogs and Hot Rods (Water for Christ Fundraiser); May 18, 10 a.m.; LifeSong, Greenbrier.

50th Anniversary Homecoming; May 19; Kellogg Valley, No. Little Rock; Paul Rice, pastor.

Gospel Singing; May 19, 5 p.m., featuring The Representatives; Barney, Enola; Reagan Shearer, pastor.

SOAR 2024; July 3-5; Live! By Loews Convention Center; Arlington, Texas.

Student Ministry Workers Retreat; Sept. 14; Central Baptist College; Conway.

Re:Charge Leaders Oasis; Oct. 1-3; Calvary, Fayetteville.

BMA of Arkansas Mtg.; Nov. 7-8; Central Baptist College, Conway.

HOMEcomings

Haynes, Haynes, April 28; 10 a.m. Sunday School, 11 a.m. Worship, lunch and singing to follow; Don Lewis, pastor.

Union, Rosston, May 26; 10:30 a.m.; Mitch Dulaney, message; Joe Brown, pastor.

PRAY

(Continued From Page 1)

• We yield to Him at the associational level, declaring that it all belongs to Him and He holds the future.

• We yield to Him at the church level, declaring that it all belongs to Him and He holds the future.

• We yield to Him at an individual level, declaring that it all belongs to Him and He holds the future.

At the National Meeting, we will also have a prayer room set up to continue praying this way

a 97 for a total score of 190.

Track

• **Searcy, April 6** — Competing for the first time in three weeks, CBC was back at the Bison Open, hosted by Harding University. CBC had five athletes competing with Josh Brown and Evan East on the men’s side and Lindsey Risner, Bay Davis and Mackenzie Milligan running for the women. Brown ran both hurdle events, the 110 and 400-meter events, placing sixth in both while setting a new program record in the 110 of 15.34 seconds, breaking his own record set last year at Central Missouri. His time in the 400 meters was 1:01.46. East competed in the 400-meters and finished in 52.93 seconds. Milligan and Davis both ran the 1500-meter distance on the women’s side, with Milligan running a 6:34 and Davis running a 6:43. Risner ran a 16.22 in the 100 meters.

utilizing the PRAY model. Please look for signs and join us there for prayer and prayer resources. If you’d like a PDF of the PRAY acronym or need other ideas about how you can be in prayer, please reach out to heidi@bmaglobal.org. We’d also love to hear from you before or after the national meeting to know you are praying and to celebrate what God does through the prayers of His people.

PHOTO

(Continued From Page 1)

information to the database we have on file for many of our pastors and leaders in the BMA. Our goal is to keep this as up-to-date as possible by allowing you to access it and provide the latest information. It is important that you provide your best contact information so we can let you know how to access the directory and also keep your information updated in the future.

Our goal is for every ministry leader (i.e., WMA, Galileans, department leaders, etc.) and pastor to stop by and have their photo taken during the meeting. As another incentive, we will be drawing for three \$50 restaurant gift cards at the conclusion of the meeting. Everyone who has their picture taken for the new directory will have a chance to win.

For more information, visit BaptistTrumpet.com/BMAA2024. You can also visit our table in the vendor display area or with Mark and his wife, Joy, at the photo studio.

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The Distraction of Good Things

By Adrienne Kennedy

Missions itself was an idol in my life, and I didn't realize that until I went to college. During a student-led service, I went through this list of diagnostic questions to assess my heart:

- Would I give up my family and never see them again in order to obey my call to missions? Would I be able to do it? Would I still respond to the call? The answer was that it'd be difficult, but yes, I would do it.

- If I had no guarantee of ever getting married or having children, would I still respond? It'd be hard, but yes.

- Would I still be willing to go if there was the possibility of being tortured? Yes, I would still be willing.

- Then I asked myself this question: Would I still be content in the Lord if I never set foot on foreign soil again? And my answer was, "No."

That's when I realized missions was an idol in my life because my call became more about missions than it was about the God of mission. I had lost sight of why the mission even exists in the first place — to bring Him glory.

So, I had to repent of that idolatry in my heart. John Calvin once said, "The human heart is a perpetual idol factory." We tend to make idols not just out of money or power but also of ministry and mission. Just because something is a "good thing" does not mean it's off-limits to the idol factories in our hearts.

I still have to continually search my heart and make sure I'm not seeking the mission itself more than I am seeking the God of mission. I had to hand my call back over to Him and say, "Praise You, God, that You held me by my coattails and did not let me enter the mission field before showing me my sinful heart. Praise You for lovingly restraining me so that You might release me to go do ministry alongside my husband as someone who has a heart more fully focused on You."

Think of the analogy in the

Psalms, where the silver is being melted down, and the dross is coming up to the top. The silversmith skillfully wipes away the dross and throws it away, refining and refining the silver as all those impurities come to the surface.

Anthony and I have experienced trials in our first three years of marriage that people without the Lord would not have made it through. We've faced unexpected loss, deaths and suffering in great proportion. Through those trials, God brought out the ugliness lurking deep down inside us and showed us that we need to discard it and be filled with Him instead. If we had rushed to the foreign mission field before God brought us through these refining fires, we would have attempted to serve Him while still harboring that "dross" deep within ourselves. Not only that, but we would have also sacrificed so much intimacy with Christ and closeness with one another. Therefore, we rejoice greatly in these hard times and this season of waiting to enter the foreign field, as God has used it to build a more solid foundation in our marriage for future ministry.

So, as much as my heart longs to be "on the ground" yesterday, to be on the field doing whatever ministry we're called to, we long much more to let the Lord continue doing what He's doing. Our ministry, as a result of the Lord doing it His way and not my way, is going to be so much more beautiful, fruitful, exciting and adventurous. It will be so much more than I could have ever even imagined or dreamed.

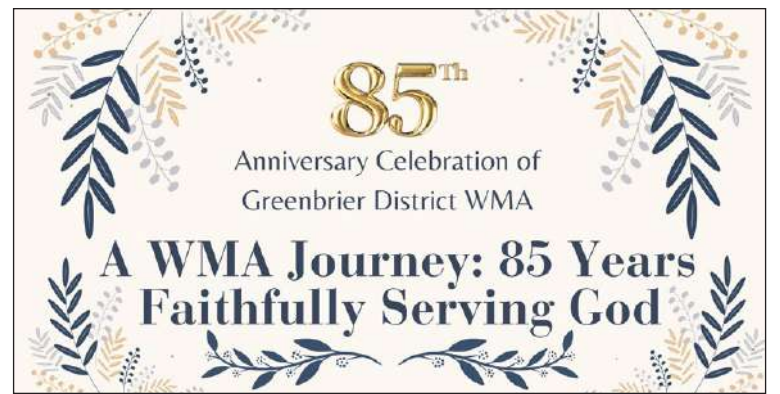
God is the God beyond our wildest dreams. My dream was to graduate college and make a beeline for some remote jungle somewhere. But God, in His great mercy, saw my heart then and sees my current need to continue to mature. Though I know, as Christians, we never "arrive" in the sense that we are always growing and

maturing our whole lives, I know God's timing is perfect. If we're not on the field yet, it's for good reason. God is using everything we're involved in right now for His Kingdom and our sanctification. What we're doing now is exactly what we'd be doing overseas, just in our own cultural context, and I truly believe it's the training and preparation we desperately need.

Presently, at Faith Baptist Church in Mena, we are trying to develop a culture of reproducible discipleship. God has given all Christians a place in His ministry, and that is through discipleship. We have set our focus on being present where God has us instead of fighting to get on the field before we're ready. As a result of this, God has graciously done work for His kingdom through us, though we don't even have a right, in and of ourselves, to be in the kingdom of God to begin with! He not only has mercifully given us a place in His kingdom through the work of Christ, but God has also lovingly given us a place in His ministry of growing His kingdom, and that is through making disciples.

Though this is not the path my past self would have originally chosen in my immaturity and limited perspective, we are joyfully and willingly looking to God to teach and guide us however and wherever He chooses. I know for a fact that because I serve the God that is beyond my wildest dreams, my current reality is — and my future in Him will be — beyond my wildest dreams.

— *Anthony and Adrienne Kennedy are interns with Larry Barker and Heidi Sorrels and disciple-makers at Faith Baptist in Mena. They have been working with Pastor Zack Johnson in the last year to build a relational discipleship culture at their church. Their vision has greatly impacted the church and, with prayer, the community around them.*



Greenbrier District WMA Plans 85th Celebration

By Robin Tyler, President • Greenbrier District WMA

On April 19, 1939, upon an invitation from the auxiliary of Macedonia Church to the ladies in all the churches in the Greenbrier Association, a group of ladies met at Macedonia for the purpose of organizing a District Women's Missionary Auxiliary (WMA). The following churches were represented: Macedonia, Springhill and Pleasant Valley. Ladies on record as being in attendance at the meeting were Mrs. E.V. Barton (president), Mrs. J.W. Merritt (vice president), Ruby Kirby (secretary/treasurer), Ruby Rhea (reporter), Jewell Brannon, Ronald Patton, Mrs. Doyle Havens, Pearl Dillaha, Amy Brannon, Virgi Love, Mrs. W.P. Batson, Mrs. J.L. Conner, Mrs. Ola Reynolds, Mrs. E.T. Williams and Mrs. Gately. "My Faith looks up to Thee" was the opening song for the day, and a part of the last chapter of Proverbs was read for a devotional by Mrs. E.V. Barton. Foreign missions was adopted as their first project.

2024 marks the 85th year since Greenbrier District WMA was founded, and we are making plans for a celebration on April 20 at Immanuel Baptist Church in Greenbrier from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. We invite all women to join us in our celebration.

A spectacular trio is set to take the stage as our keynote speakers. For the first time ever on the same stage, Taffy Johnson, Kelly Johnson and Audrey Johnson will each be sharing about their journey with God.

Reaching back and propelling forward, our goal is to present the Greenbrier District WMA's time serving God as a "Journey Through the Years." The decor and theme for the day will give an overview of the years the Greenbrier District has served, and a rich history will be on display. Past presidents and past projects will be recognized. For information about the celebration contact me at (501) 328-7770.





Mustang Message



Dr. Slayton to Retire By Mason Crymes

CBC will host a retirement party for Dr. Joel Slayton on Thursday, April 25, at 3 p.m. in the Mabee Student Services Building Dining Hall, and we encourage people to come and attend as we honor Dr. Slayton for his service to the school over the years.

As Dr. Slayton prepares to retire at the end of the current school year, he looks forward to having more time to dedicate to other areas. "Most of my time here, I have taught at the college and pastored, filling two or more roles. Even though I will not cut my ties to the college since I'll be teaching a couple of online classes in PACE, my responsibilities will be less stressful," he said.

Since its inception, Central Baptist College has been blessed to have many great professors, and we are very proud of them and their impact on students' lives throughout the years. Dr. Joel Slayton is one of those professors.

Dr. Slayton came to CBC in 1976 and has served our school for over 48 years. He has held various positions, including instructor in Bible, professor of Bible and Biblical Languages, vice president for Graduate Affairs, interim president, vice president for Academic Affairs and chair of the Bible Department. Recently, Dr. Slayton reflected on what brought him to CBC:

"In November 1975, the Bible instructor who was teaching Greek resigned. At the time, I was pastoring a church in Huntsville, Ala. I received a call from then-President Wassell Burgess that they needed a Greek instructor. He had heard that I had majored in Biblical Languages in seminary, so he asked me if I would be interested in coming to teach Greek and Bible," Dr. Slayton said.

He emphasized that the students have been the biggest highlight of his time here. "Many of my students are now involved in churches, missions and associational work. It is my joy to see how God has used them in ministry. Then to visit churches and see former students who are now involved in lay ministry, teaching and serving the Lord is a tremendous blessing," he said.

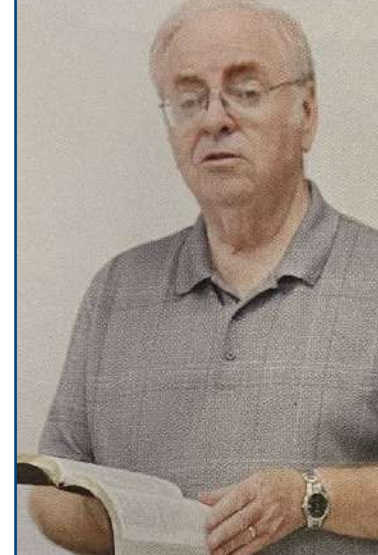
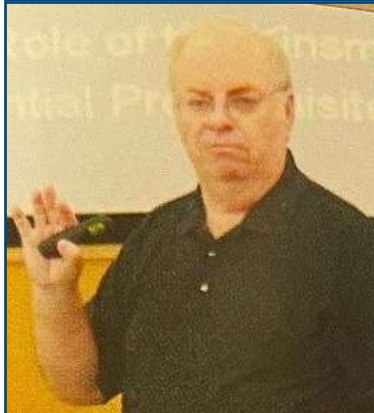
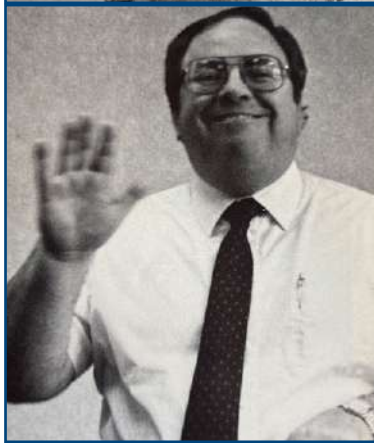
Dr. Slayton then went on to talk about some of the memories he has made throughout the years and the people he has worked with at CBC:

"I have had the privilege of working with some of the greatest faculty in the world. When I first came here, I was the Bible faculty. Others like Dr. Harold Cooper and Dr. Jesse Thomas taught a few Bible classes, but their degrees at the time were in areas other than Bible. As I moved into various positions at the college, Dr. Thomas later became chair of the Department. Dr. Ron Mitchell came along and taught theology, church history and Bible. As Dr. Thomas moved toward retirement, I became department chair. Now, Drs. Porter, Jameson and Brewer (who were all my students) serve the department well.

"I have also had the opportunity to work with faculty in all departments of the college. CBC has been blessed through the years by having faculty who were gifted to teach, excelled in their fields and loyal to Christian education.

"I have also worked with college Presidents Wassell Burgess, Harold Cooper, R.B. Hoshaw, James Ray Raines, Charles Attebery and Terry Kimbrow. Each one contributed to the college in their own way, and all have been a blessing."

Above all else, Dr. Slayton wants people to recognize the role of Scripture at the college. "CBC provides a biblically-based worldview, which is so needed in this post-modern world. We believe and teach the Bible as the inspired Word of God," he said.



CBC is committed to transforming lives by providing an education that integrates Christian faith and academic excellence in a Christ-centered environment.

Student Ministry Workers Retreat 2024 at Central Baptist College

A Day of Connection, Training and Encouragement

By Dan Carson, Director • BMA of Arkansas State Youth Department (Student Ministry Matters)

On Sept. 14, we will be meeting at Central Baptist College (CBC) for the 7th Annual Student Ministry Workers Retreat (SMWR). It is all about learning more about student ministry and connecting with others with a similar passion. There will be goody bags, snacks, giveaways, worship, breakout groups and more. Your registration takes care of your lunch, as well as a day full of training. You can register at SMWR2024.eventbrite.com.

In addition to great teaching, the first 100 attendees will receive a goody bag with a selection of free ministry books to help them in their work of discipling their students. We also provide lunch and snacks throughout the day. It is a bargain at \$30 per person. We also have college/seminary pricing and special prices for CBC students and faculty. Those registered after Aug. 27, are not guaranteed a t-shirt.

The theme for 2024 is "Discipleship." Our breakout leaders include: Heidi Sorrells, of Healthy Church Solutions & South City Church; Yalanda Merrell of Lifeword; Wade Allen of Temple Baptist Church of Rogers; Dr. Philip Attebery of the Baptist Missionary Association Theological Seminary; and Stuart Estes from the University of Arkansas Association of Baptist Students. They will be providing insight and resources to help you as you seek to disciple your students and churches.

The featured speaker for 2024 is Dr. Owen Strachan is provost and research professor of Theology at Grace Bible Theological Seminary (GBTS). Before coming to GBTS, he served as associate professor of Christian Theology and director of the Residency Ph.D

Retreat is Even Good for Volunteers

By Rachel Burns, Youth Volunteer
Temple Baptist Church in Rogers

As an alumnus of CBC, I have been familiar with the Student Ministry Matters (SMM) fall workers' retreat for several years. But this past year was the first time I truly got to attend the retreat as a participant, instead of a set of helping hands at the college. Since becoming a volunteer with my youth group at Temple Baptist Church in Rogers, the retreat for student ministry workers became even more important to attend. I greatly enjoyed my day, as we worshiped our Lord and talked about Him and how to reach His children with the gospel.

One of my favorite things about the Student Ministry Matters Workers' Retreat is the breakout sessions. This year, we had one breakout session, and they were so interesting it was hard to choose between the three options. I ended up going to a breakout by Angelyn McMurray with We Are Free. Her lecture focused on what sex trafficking is and what it can look like today. She opened my eyes to the tremendous force of evil that has swept across the world to our front door. She helped me realize it is our responsibility to report suspicious activity and to stand up for those who are trapped in the hands of the oppressor. I would not have learned about this widespread tragedy if it weren't for her explanation of the system and what it can be like. She also explained what her ministry does, and how they liberate women and children from the chains of sexual trafficking and help them start a new life.

Sometimes, I get so bogged down with the mundane that I forget I have the potential to truly impact these teens. Going to the conference reminded me that my role as a volunteer is important, and that my presence has meaning to the students at our church. Even though I am just a volunteer, I can fill in the gaps my youth pastor cannot always reach, such as when we are doing small groups or even as we are walking across the building to leave. The words I say and the things I do provide an example of how to follow Christ. It is important that my footsteps are aligned with Christ's, and my relationship with God has experienced growth since I have volunteering with my church's youth group and since attending the SMM fall retreat.

It was encouraging to be surrounded by others who are passionate about the education of the youth in our communities. SMM also put together a bundle of learning materials of diverse backgrounds. I was so grateful for the abundance of written resources Student Ministry Matters gave me to grow my faith and my understanding of the kids I am helping guide to Christ. I walked away from the retreat feeling equipped spiritually, emotionally and physically, not to mention stuffed full of amazing food provided by the college cafeteria. I thank Dan Carson for his organization of the conference and for refilling the cups of youth pastors and volunteers like me.



Program at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He earned his Ph.D from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, his M.Div from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and his AB from Bowdoin College in Brunswick, Maine.

He is married and the father of three children. Strachan has authored numerous books, including *Reenchanting Humanity: A Theology of Mankind*, *The Pastor as Public Theologian: Reclaiming a Lost Vision* (with Kevin Vanhoozer) and *Christianity and Wokeness: How the Social Justice Movement is Hijacking the Gospel — and the Way to Stop It*. Strachan is the former president of the Council on Biblical Manhood & Womanhood, the former director of The Center for Public Theology at MBTS and is the president of Reformanda Ministries.

What is There Not to Love?

By Mike Hoke, Youth Pastor
Grace Baptist Church, Russellville

What is there not to love about retreats — great speakers, great door prizes, great worship, wonderful people to spend the day with who love God and students, and of course there is food provided!

On a more serious note, the retreats offer an opportunity for networking with other youth ministry workers, where we can gain ideas and share struggles with others who understand. When we started attending the retreats, we were new youth directors that did not know where to start. The people I met at the retreat prayed for us and gave us ideas for planning. Our church encouraged us to network with local youth ministers in our association and this retreat provides us with that. The speakers do a phenomenal job delivering God's Word to us, and their messages are relevant and applicable to what we do in our ministry and life.



2024
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Dr. Owen Strachan
FEATURED SPEAKER

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The Master's Builders: "Help A Brother and Sister Out!"

By Rose Bittner, Reporter

A small group of Master's Builders were blessed to be able to work in Biscoe, Arkansas last November at First Assembly of God in Biscoe, Ark. This is the home church of our newest Master's Builders members, Billy and Dawanna Keys. Billy and Dawanna joined the Master's Builders after working with the Nail Benders group for many years. The Nail Benders were also a group of volunteers dedicated to helping churches with building needs. When the Nail Benders needed to disband their group, the Master's Builders were blessed to have Billy and Dawanna join!

Their church has had floor problems for many years. The sub-floor was rotting in the classroom and office areas and was desperately needing to be repaired. Sagging flooring, and cracks that pulled the floor away from the wall, allowed air and moisture to come in.

The Master's Builders were happy to be able to come out and work on First Assembly during the month of November when they are usually

off for winter break. God blessed the group with good weather and a very productive time. The Builders were able to tear out all the old floors and replace all the support beams and install flooring in four rooms and a restroom. The baptistery needed some extra support, so the Builders were able to do that while they had all the flooring pulled up. It was a "treasure hunt" of sorts in the dirt below the building as the Builders found several old buttons, coins and nails as they crawled around!

Several members of the church were on hand each day to help and fellowship with The Master's Builders. Donald Whitcomb and Kent Smith were there each day to help, and Pastor Thomas Whittaker came to help when he could. Billy Keys worked hard each day, as well as making sure the Master's Builders had all the needed supplies.

Also, a special "thank you" to Charlie Simpson Construction in Biscoe for being on hand to help with this project and lend some advice. The ladies cooked

Opportunities For Service

Fairview Baptist Church in Blytheville is in search of a pastor. For more information, contact Rodney Cooper at (870) 278-1797 or cooperr@manilaschools.org.

delicious meals and showed much love to the Master's Builders in many ways during their time there. Their kindness will be remembered always. The Master's Builders were so pleased to help one of their own members' churches with their repair needs. God is good!

Our next job is set for April 8-19 at Oak Ridge Baptist Church in Cassville, Mo. If you are in the area, come by and visit with us or come help for the day. Follow us on Facebook. "Like" our page at "The Master's Builders" (arbor logo) and watch for daily updates with lots of pictures and information about work being done. If you have questions about The Master's Builders ministry, or if your church has building needs, please contact Mike Green at (972) 935-3877, David Axe at (903) 918-0702 or Eddie Sikes at (479) 462-1675.

Revivals

Central, Trumann; April 14-17, Sun. 5 p.m., Mon.-Wed. 6:30 p.m.; Joel McMasters (Sun.), Rick Jensen (Mon.), Jerry Arnold (Tues.), Larry Loggins (Wed.), evangelists; Blake Jamison, pastor.

Fellowship, Walnut Ridge; April 14-17; Sun. 5:30 p.m., Mon.-Wed. 6:30 p.m.; Vance Penns, evangelist; John Durham, pastor.

Milligan Ridge, Manila; April 15-19, 7 p.m.; Steven Sanders, evangelist; Mike Colvin, pastor.

Antioch, Hampton; April 21-24, 6 p.m.; The Master's Voice; Mike Nutt, pastor.

First, Cave Springs; April 21-24, 6:30 p.m.; Harold Smith (Sun.), Wes Brown (Mon.), Derrick Bremmer (Tue.), and Todd Spradlin (Wed.), evangelists; Michael Battenfield, pastor.

Kingsland, Kingsland; April 21-24, 6 p.m. Sunday, 7 p.m. Mon.-Wed.; Wade Totty, evangelist; Rick Bolin, pastor.

Bodcaw #1, Emmet; April 22-24, 7 p.m.; Bo Murphey, evangelist;

DISTRICT CALENDAR

Central Ark. Dist. Brotherhood; April 15, 6:30 p.m.; Church at Willow Beach, N. Little Rock.

85th Anniversary; Greenbrier Dist. WMA; April 20; Immanuel, Greenbrier.

Mt. Vernon Youth In Harvest; April 29, 6:30 p.m.; Rondo, Lexa.

Jonesboro Dist. Brotherhood; May 14; Prospect, Jonesboro.

Mt. Vernon Youth in Harvest; May 20, 6:30 p.m.; Bethel, Forrest City.

Mt. Vernon Dist. Brotherhood; June 3, 6:30 p.m.; Grace, Wynne.

United District WMA; July 13, 10 a.m.; Hattieville, Hattieville

Jonesboro Dist. Brotherhood; June 25; Discover Mission, Prospect, Jonesboro.

Timothy Vines, pastor.

Barney, Enola; May 15-18, 6:30 p.m.; Verlon Wood, evangelist; Reagan Shearer, pastor.

Union, Rosston; May 25-27, 7 p.m.; Jim Moss, evangelist; Joe Brown, pastor.

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Spinning My Gears
a young pastor's perspective
Derrick A. Bremer, Pastor
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The whole is greater than
 the sum of its parts.

Aristotle

Pieces Make the Whole

In Paul's first letter to the church in Corinth, we find the familiar illustration of the church as a body (I Cor. 12:12-27). Paul mentioned the feet, hands, ears and eyes that belong to the body. He even contrasts body parts that are weaker with those that are stronger and those that are less honorable with those that are more honorable. This illustration captures the unity and interconnectedness of the church and highlights each member's unique role. It's a reminder that each of us is an integral part of the larger whole, contributing to our church's health and growth.

When pieces come together to make something larger, characteristics and capabilities often emerge that didn't exist in the individual parts. The apostle Paul observed this principle when he concluded that the church, "just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ" (I Cor. 12:12 NIV). People who study economics separate the understanding of the consequences of individual decisions and large-scale factors like interest rates. Conversations about church health do the same thing.

Whether in secular studies or the service of a local church, I get excited when I think about emergence. Nobody I've read or spoken with can explain what happens when individuals come together to make something bigger than themselves. People smarter than me make attempts to reverse-engineer and reconfigure these pieces, but they are forced to admit that a miraculous event takes place when they come together. I'm happy to acknowledge that when it comes to the church, "... God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be" (I Cor. 12:18). The miracle is the handiwork of our Creator.

If Missionary Baptists have any pet doctrine, it is what we believe about the church. The writings and contributions made by the leaders within our work have primarily

focused on the nature and function of the church. Our Doctrinal Statement gives more specificity to no other system of theology. This focus has been the key to our strength and health as an association. I desire and pray that the BMA of America, and each state and local association, will be strong and healthy. My desire stems from appreciating this principle of emergence.

Associations are comprised of local and autonomous churches. Through associations, churches can do more than they could ever do alone. We are partners together in ministry. The small church I shepherd has the potential to raise a person with a desire to serve in missions without being limited by the provisions of one congregation. We can participate in ministries that our limited resources as a church couldn't provide for on their own, like the Baptist Publishing House, Daniel Springs Camp, Lifeword, BMA Theological Seminary and Moral Action! This potential and power of the church should inspire us to strive for more, to reach out beyond our individual capacities and to make a greater impact in the world.

When we discuss the health of larger systems, we should learn from Paul's illustration that the pieces make the whole. No one can make our associations healthier than they are today by focusing their attention on what needs to change. A healthy association is made up of healthy churches, so our focus should be on getting the individual parts healthy.

The church is the body of Christ. Unlike associations, Jesus has given the local church authority in this world. With that authority comes the responsibility of protecting the purity of the gospel and the church's witness, extending the reach of the gospel to all the tribes of the earth and the ability to make decisions. There is no substitute for healthy churches in the ministry. These emerging properties that make the

POLICY

(Continued From Page 1)

committed to preserving our mission at all costs.

The NAIA's COP approved the policy in a 20-0 vote. Below is the official press release from the NAIA Director of Communications Jen Saab:

The National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) Council of Presidents (COP) voted on April 8 to adopt a new transgender participation policy, effective Aug. 1, 2024.

In April 2022, the NAIA's Transgender Task Force was formed and tasked with determining whether the NAIA's existing transgender policy needed to be altered and if so, bring forth a new policy recommendation to the COP. During their nearly two years of work, the task force was guided by the following principles: creating fairness in competition, treating individuals with respect and dignity, and ensuring transparent efforts and encouraging member feedback.

"We are unwavering in our support of fair competition for our student-athletes," said NAIA Presi-

dent & CEO Jim Carr. "It is crucial that NAIA member institutions, conferences and student-athletes participate in an environment that is equitable and respectful. With input from our member institutions and the Transgender Task Force, the NAIA's Council of Presidents has confirmed our path forward."

church what it is are breathtaking when we take the time to appreciate what God has built together. We want healthy churches, so we need healthy churches, which means we need healthy Christians. That is where the rubber meets the road. Aristotle's famous quote, "The parts of the whole are greater than the sum of all of its parts," often gets misunderstood and misapplied. The Greek philosopher identified the property of emergence in systems. He wasn't saying that the whole is more important than the parts. My desire for healthy churches means I need to focus on my church. Taken one step further, my desire for my church to be healthy means I need to focus on being a healthy pastor. Keep going down this train of thought, and we'll find that I have to focus on being a healthy Christian to be a healthy pastor.

Our understanding of this, as an association of Baptist churches, makes being a member of the BMA special. Our missions department, through the ministry of Healthy Church Solutions, pays special attention to investing in the spiritual needs of pastors. Our seminary, which has been in operation for 69 years, makes advanced training attainable with affordable tuition costs. Our publications department delivers a quality, spiritually enriching curriculum for our churches. When we get the parts of the whole healthy, God works a miracle in what we become together.

dent & CEO Jim Carr. "It is crucial that NAIA member institutions, conferences and student-athletes participate in an environment that is equitable and respectful. With input from our member institutions and the Transgender Task Force, the NAIA's Council of Presidents has confirmed our path forward."

The updated NAIA policy attempts to balance the interests and obligations of the NAIA to offer fair competition, create a structure that allows members to comply with Title IX and other applicable laws and provide appropriate and reasonable opportunities for transgender athletes to compete.

Input regarding transgender participation in athletics was obtained from members and student-athletes throughout the process, with feedback overwhelmingly in favor of the proposed policy.

Title IX ensures there are separate and equal opportunities for female athletes. As a result, the NAIA offers separate categories of competition in all sports except for competitive cheer and competitive dance, which are both co-ed. The new transgender participation policy will therefore apply to all sports except for cheer and dance.

Student-athletes may participate in NAIA competition in accordance with the following conditions:

- Participation by students in sports designated as male by the NAIA: All eligible NAIA student-athletes may participate in NAIA-sponsored male sports.

- Participation by students in sports designated as female by the NAIA: Only NAIA student-athletes whose biological sex is female may participate in NAIA-sponsored female sports. They may participate under the following conditions:

- A student who has not begun any masculinizing hormone therapy may participate without limitation.

- A student who has begun masculinizing hormone therapy may participate in:

- * All activities that are internal to the institution (does not include external competition), including workouts, practices and team activities. Such participation is at the discretion of the NAIA member institution where the student is enrolled; and

- * External competition that is not a countable contest as defined by the NAIA (per National Administrative Council (NAC) Policy Article XXV, Section A, Item 12). Such participation is at the discretion of the NAIA member institution where the student is enrolled.

An NAIA institution that has a student-athlete who has begun masculinizing hormone therapy
See POLICY, Page 12



Brandon, BMA Pastor Dies

Elvis Viridine Brandon, 81, of Rector, Arkansas passed away April 2. He was a longtime BMA pastor. He surrendered to the ministry in 1975 and was ordained May 29, 1977 by Shady Grove Baptist Church in Piggott, his first pastorate. He went on to serve in a number of other churches in Arkansas including: Boydsville, Rector (SBC); Antioch, Rector; Prairie, Lake City; Elm Grove, Lake City; Blooming Grove, Rector; Bethany, Jonesboro; True Light, McDougal; Valley View, Jonesboro; and Central, Trumann. He also pastored Glenview in Independence, Mo.

Survivors include: his wife of 58 years, Carol; two daughters, Tami (Rick) Williams of Jonesboro and Shelley (Tony) Davis of Trumann; two sons, Shawn (Janee) Brandon of Rector and Hunter (Brittney) Brandon of Caraway; two sisters, Byrlene (Curtis) Barker of Williford and Betty Brandon of Paragould; and a brother, James Terry (Janet) Brandon of Paragould; 11 grandchildren and 9 great grandchildren.

A celebration of life was held at Irby-Mitchell Funeral Home (irbyfuneralhome.com) in Rector April 6, with Jerry Jolly and Leon Harvey officiating. Burial followed at Rogers Chapel Cemetery in Crockett.



Jack E Bower, 87 of Jonesboro, passed away April 5. He was a veteran and a member of Cathedral Baptist Church.

Randy Dean Leach, 75 of Enola, passed away March 28. He was a member of Marcus Hill Baptist Church.

Franklin "Leon" Brown, 96 of Centerton, passed away March 25. He was a veteran and member of Victory Baptist Church in Gentry.

Nancy Ann Harris, 69 of Bald Knob, passed away March 19. She was a member of Russell Baptist Church in Russell.



The Epic Story of Truth (Part 9): King and Kingdom Promised, But the Kingdom was Lost

How good is your memory? I'll be testing that today and over the next several articles. We're not doing a Bible Drill; instead, I'm returning to a series I paused eight weeks ago. (Right here would be a good place to enter that "yikes" emoji!) Before that pause, I had written part eight of this series, *The Epic Story of Truth*, in which I'm telling the narrative that runs the duration of the Bible and is the very flow of history and the life ahead here on earth.

It is good to get that big-picture view of the Bible, but I also want to show how topics that seem to be fringe, such as prophecy and God's continued plan for Israel, fit into the story of the Bible. Unfortunately, when we describe the gospel or the narrative of the Bible and Christianity, we sell it short, giving just a sliver of the story, which, in return, makes much of the Bible and historic events seem irrelevant. Nothing in the Bible is irrelevant. It is all building to the perfect climax and resolution designed by the Master Author of this world and its flow of events.

In that series, we began in Genesis with the creation of all things — especially us and how mankind rebelled and was removed from the Garden of Eden and placed into a cursed earth. Yet, in the sentencing of Adam and Eve and the world, God hinted at the epic story that would unfold. He said a "promised seed from Eve" would come and destroy Satan and his seed, but in that declaration, it was also told that

this promised seed would be hurt.

Then we jumped to Revelation and read about how this promised seed is the returning Jesus. He will return, defeat the seed of Satan and lock Satan up. Jesus will then establish His kingdom. Next, we flipped back to Genesis and looked at how, after Adam and Eve, the world continued to spiral into sin so much so that God sent a flood, but in that flood saved Noah and his family. In announcing the restart of the earth, God dropped another hint — that He would not destroy the world again with water, but that it would be destroyed again. This led us to flip to the end of the New Testament again to see how God foretold the earth as we know it will be destroyed with fire, but there will be a New Heaven and Earth.

In keeping with the pattern, we looked back at Genesis at how that people rebelled again, this time building a tower to make a name for themselves and reach the heavens. God intervened, dispersing the people and giving the formation of nations and languages. At that time, God disinherited the nations and took a nation of His own — Israel.

We looked at how, once Jesus came the first time, the invitation to belong to God's family was extended back to the nations through Christ. Then we looked at how God's people were given a specific land for eternity but had stipulations on how they'd be able to live there. They didn't keep the laws that allowed them to stay there, but God promised one day, through a

New Covenant, they could. Through this New Covenant, God's people, Jew and Gentile, would be able to live out the law with their new heart.

We begin the discussion back in the Old Testament. Israel is living in that Promised Land, and they've asked God for a king like their neighbors. The king they chose, Saul, failed. God's man, David, became king, and he had a desire to build a temple for God. God responded by sending the prophet Nathan to speak to David about it and relay a promise from God to King David:

"...The Lord declares to you that the Lord himself will establish a house for you: When your days are over and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever... Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever" (II Sam. 7:11-16 NIV).

Through Nathan, God declared that a descendant of David would be on the throne in Israel forever. On one level, Nathan was talking about David's son, Solomon, but he also was saying that the "promised seed of Eve" would not just be a special person but "a promised King" or "an anointed one." This anointed, promised King would be a descendant of David and rule on an eternal throne. The Word for "anointed one" in Hebrew is "Messiah," and in Greek, it is "Christ". (Other prophets, like Isaiah, Micah and Daniel, shared more details about this promised king and kingdom.)

Yet, after Solomon, David's kingdom of Israel was split in two, and soon the northern half was taken into captivity in Assyria, then the southern half was taken to Babylon. Though Jews returned, there hasn't been a kingdom since. This could seem like the story stalled out, but the "Anointed One" has come and taken His bruise from Satan, and the Anointed One or Messiah or Christ is coming back to bring His Kingdom.

Dive into the Epic Story yourself by reading II Samuel 7, Isaiah 9, Micah 5, Daniel 2, II Chronicles 36 and Luke 19.

— Jake is a state missionary and would love to share about the work in Northwest Arkansas and encourage your church to stand firm. (standfirmministries.com)



Who Am I?

Who am I — a well-known athlete, a celebrity, a computer whiz, a CEO, a renowned author? We all have dreams of the direction we want our lives to go and the goals we hope to achieve. Many have found that place where they excel and gain their special identity. They each feel like this is "Who I am" and "Who I want to be." Others can't seem to realize their dreams, feel insignificant and wonder just who they are and what their purpose in life is. Sometimes, they even resent those who have found a name for themselves.

The truth is that careers, high positions and social and economic statuses will all eventually end or just fade away. Old age, retirement, unexpected financial losses, health deterioration and any other unforeseen circumstances can all suddenly change your whole life, leaving you feeling like you no longer have any identity or self-worth.

For believers in Christ, the "Who am I?" was settled a long time ago. It never changes, never fades away and never ends. Let's see what God's Word tells us:

- **I am His creation.** *"For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb... My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place... all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be" (Psalms 139:13-16 NIV).* There is no one else like me and you.
- **I am chosen.** *"You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit..." (John 15:16).*
- **I am saved by grace.** *"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God." (Eph. 2:8).*
- **I am forgiven.** *"... Everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins through His name" (Acts 10:43).*
- **I am free from condemnation.** *"Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:1).*
- **I am a new creation.** *"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!" (II Cor. 5:17).*
- **I am a child of God, and I am loved.** *"See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God..." (I John 3:1).*
- **I am an heir and co-heir of God and Christ.** *"Now if we are children, then we are heirs — heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory" (Rom. 8:17).* What a heritage!
- **I am God's temple.** *"Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in your midst?" (I Cor. 3:16).*
- **I am an overcomer.** *"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?... No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us" (Rom. 8:35, 37).*
- **I am confident that I and all believers can** *"approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need" (Rom. 4:16).*

So there you have it. Our identity and self-worth are not bound up in the standards of the world that leaves us hanging, but rather in our relationship with God. We are special in God's eyes and answers the question: "Who am I?"

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PAUL WHITE
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The Unchanging And Unwavering God

The definition of Sovereign is ruler, supreme ruler, supreme authority, monarch.

We should be grateful that the God of Heaven is both holy and just. *“For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy”* (Isa. 57:15).

“He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he” (Deut. 32:4).

The concept of time was made for man in order for us to keep up with things. God is outside of time. When it says He is the same yesterday, today and forever, that is because He is eternal and the One who created time. We wear a watch and observe the hands constantly changing. Think of God as the hands, always present because there is no time He is not.

A sovereign God is not only omnipotent, but also omniscient and omnipresent, meaning He is not only everywhere but is in every moment at the same time. Does God know who will be saved? Of course He does, or He is not sovereign. Then does man have a choice to choose or reject God? Of course He does, or God is not sovereign. The fact that God knows the end from the beginning gives Him a major advantage as to how He will use some to bring Him honor or dishonor and whether they will choose to receive or reject His gift of salvation.

Imagine with me that it is time for the annual Christmas parade. All the bands, floats, riders and Santa’s sled are assembled in order. Now let us imagine God is in a 10-story building looking down on the parade. From His vantage point, He can see the procession coming. He sees the first, second and so on as they pass. If you were standing on the street, seeing only what is in front of you, and shouted to Him to ask what was coming next and again the next, He could tell you at that moment because of His vantage point. But that does not mean He is changing any from their starting positions. He knows because He can see from the beginning until the end. This is true for He also knows believers and unbelievers alike. When, do you think, was the last time God was surprised by what transpires? Just because God knows who will and who will not accept Him through His foreknowledge does not mean He interferes.

Imagine watching a ballgame and then it is rebroadcast the next day. You would know what was going to happen from having watched it the day before — unlike God, who sees what will be in the future because it is all the same to Him. He could have written a detailed autobiography of every person who has ever lived from the very foundation of creation — because He is God! He knew us in our mother’s womb and knows every aspect of our lives until death — and yes, He even knows that. *“But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered...”* (Luke 12:7).

In closing, two cruise ships schedules are set by the owners, or the ones with the power to do so. The day of their departure is pre-determined. The destination of each is pre-determined. The length of the cruise is pre-determined. The food to be brought on board is pre-determined. But whomever boards one or the other ship is not the owner’s responsibility. If you want to go to point A, you will board that one, if to point B, the other. Where the passenger ends up is determined by which ship he chooses. Your destination is determined through your personal choice. God has also given man two choices— live or die. *“I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live”* (Deut. 30:19). Be sure you’re on the right ship!

From Our Missionaries
Misión Creciendo en Cristo (Growing in Christ), North Little Rock: Juan Carlos Posadas

writes, “I have had severe flu this week, which started as an allergic reaction to pollen. I have had nasal congestion and cough. I took med-

icine, but it has not been possible to contain it due to the activities I have to do at night, especially with the roof replacement project.

“At the beginning of the week, we prepared by purchasing materials and processing the permit to change the roof. On Friday, Bro. Dublas, who directed the project, began with his work teams, removing not only the shingles but also the plywood under the shingles since the roof showed undulations which indicated that it was necessary to replace the plywood with an OSB (Oriented Strand Board) plywood.

“On Sunday, just before the sermon, the shingle nailing work was finished, and we had no interference with the development of our meeting.

“All the work has not been finished yet, as some carpentry details are needed to finish replacing the shingles on the edges and porch of the main entrance. We thank God for His provision to purchase materials and pay for labor. Pray that pressure on offerings will not discourage people from attending meetings.”

Ebenezer, West Little Rock: Ruben Isturiz writes, “I thank God for what has been happening in the last few weeks at Ebenezer. We are trying to get our home Bible groups back, but for now, we only have one. During the pandemic, they all disappeared and getting them back to meeting has been very difficult. Thank God, we have an active one and how interesting it is with new people. We have two more in line. Pray they can be started. Much of the growth at Ebenezer has been through the home groups.

“Last Friday, I had the privilege of taking my daughter, Zuly on a tour to the college she is applying to. Three hours to go to Northwest

Arkansas and three hours back. It was a blessing to visit our son, Ruben and my nephew, Isaac who are studying at the same college.

“We had an inspiring service Sunday, and our attendance both in person and online has been maintained. We finished the topic about the three days and three nights of Jesus Christ in the tomb. Thank God, we had great participation.

“After the service, I went to the baseball stadium because a new season has started and, as chaplain of the Arkansas Travelers, it is a privilege to give the Bible study to the Hispanic players of the team and the visiting players. This season, all the chaplains are touching on Proverbs and James. Please pray for this ministry in which I serve on a volunteer basis. Thank you for your prayers. To God be the glory.”

Faith Chapel, Flippin: Johnny Shew writes, “We had a great week at Faith Chapel! The flu is still going around, but even with a few families out, we still had a good number and a great time of worship. Our kids have been practicing a special for a long time, and they finally did it for us this week. They sang a song that is all the books of the New Testament, and they did it wonderfully — what a blessing! I posted the video to our Facebook page so we can share it. You should watch, it really is sweet!

“The drywallers were not able to make it back last week, but they assured me that they will be back to finish up early this week. The foundation blocks are laid for the classrooms, and the plumber said he will be here this week to start the rough in. When he’s done, the floors will be poured, and we will be ready for The Master’s Builders. We are excited and can’t wait to see them all again, and to get this building finished and get moved in!

“We thank you all for your prayers and support, and for allowing us to be a part of what the BMA of Arkansas and all of you are doing here in Flippin. We can’t thank you, or God, enough!”

Faith Journey, Benton: Bryan Clay writes, “We had a great time with our mission family at Faith Journey this week. We had another fun and (a little competitive) game of trivia, followed by our weekly lesson on prayer. We love challenging each other with learning

the Bible and some friendly fun!

“Several of our families need prayer for healing for family members. We believe in the power of praying without ceasing. God is always leaning in to hear the prayers of His children. He wants to hear our worship, praise, burdens and everything in between. He desires a relationship with us and our spirit longs for a relationship with Him.

“We reached out to several landowners this week, so please continue to pray that God will open hearts and doors for us at Faith Journey.

“We hope everyone enjoyed the total solar eclipse this week and stayed safe. It is just a small reminder to us of how great our God is!”

Misión Gracia Soberana (Sovereign Grace), NWA: Roberto Marcelletti writes, “Greetings from the Northwest! Last week, we announced that our next baptisms would soon be the second one we are going to have and two sisters already spoke to me that they want to be baptized. One is the elderly sister, Nanee and the other is a teenager, Ashley. I must speak with a couple that could possibly also be ready to go down to the waters.

“In our small groups (Grace Groups), we continue to work intentionally so that the brothers disciple others. We have three sisters — Iris, Yoli, Marget — and a girl, Isabella who already have their disciples. We praise God for this.”

Epic Life, Pea Ridge: Jake McCandless writes, “I ran out of room last week to share, but our late nights last week were indicative of the connectivity of our Connection Groups. Our events always go long. We’re far from the typical hour. Last week, I took part in all our Connection Groups. Wednesday night, we started at 6 p.m. but didn’t get home until 9:45 p.m. Long after the Bible study, we talked, and then one of the neighbor friends of the kids in the host home, introduced us to his mother and we talked with her for a long time about her faith. Then on Friday night we joined our Garfield Group, which started at 7 p.m. and made it home after midnight — yes, midnight! We were able to talk through so much with different members. I shared last week that we had two boys asking about baptism, but Wednesday a third was added to the list. He went home talking about salvation with his parents the week before. His mom shared with us how our multi-generational Bible studies had broken down the barrier between parents and kids in regard to talking about faith and the Bible. That is one of my favorite things that has been said.

“Those things were incredible, but Sunday was a bummer. We **See MISSIONS, Page 12**



New roof on the Misión Creciendo en Cristo (Growing in Christ), North Little Rock church building (former Berean Baptist Church)

MISSIONS

(Continued From Page 11)

had our second Coaches' Meeting planned and all but one coach had to cancel. I've felt the most resistance around our Coach Meetings. Please pray for these coaches who are committed to be missionaries in their unique contexts leading to created new Connection Groups."

El Faro #2 Hispanic Mission, Cabot/Jacksonville: Michael Hight writes, "I ask you to pray with me about a man named Omar I met this week. He is an agnostic but has a lot of questions. I am trying to build a relationship with him so he can hear a clear presentation of the gospel."

"On the health front, I got some of my testing results and one of the plasma tests revealed that I still have a substantial infection somewhere in my body. I googled the results, but they scared me, so I am going to wait for the doctor to tell me what it means. In the meantime, I joined a gym and am trying to slowly get back the strength this illness has taken from me. I know God has a plan, and I am trying to be patient. My follow up with the specialist doesn't come until June 11 so it's a lot of hurry up and wait. Keep us in your prayers, we are still convinced God is at work."

POLICY

(Continued From Page 5)

must notify the NAIA national office. The national office will take the necessary steps to provide appropriate privacy protections.

This policy will be subject to review in light of any legal, scientific or medical developments.

The NAIA emphasizes the importance of respecting the privacy of transgender athletes. Institutions are responsible for adhering to NAIA regulations and self-reporting any policy violations. The policy will

undergo periodic reviews to ensure it remains aligned with legal, scientific and medical advancements.

The NAIA met April 5-9 in Kansas City, Mo. as part of the 2024 NAIA National Convention.

About NAIA — The National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA), headquartered in Kansas City, Mo., is a governing body of small athletics programs that are dedicated to character-driven intercollegiate athletics. Since 1937, the NAIA has administered programs dedicated to championships in balance with the overall college educational experience.



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