



**ARKANSAS BAPTIST STATE CONVENTION
ANNUAL REPORT 2020**



 **Arkansas**
BAPTISTS



2020 ARKANSAS BAPTISTS



January 20
Partnership between Arkansas Baptist Children's Homes & Family Ministries and Central Baptist Church in Jonesboro to make Christian counseling more available for Arkansas families through Living Well Counseling.

February 29
1,300 high school and college students attend the annual Lead > Defend Leadership and Apologetics conference.

March 13
COVID-19 declared a national emergency. Many churches stop in-person gatherings and ministry events are modified, delayed or cancelled.

The Paycheck Protection Program is introduced and the Arkansas Baptist Foundation assists many churches navigate their options.

June 1
Camp Siloam makes the difficult decision to cancel in-person summer camps for 2020. The camp offers virtual materials for campers throughout the summer.

July 12-13
With the cancellation of Super Summer Arkansas, the Camo Experience, an apologetics intensive for high school seniors, goes virtual, allowing student groups to participate.

August 31
Over 200 Arkansas Baptist pastors and church staff members attend the Statewide Prayer Gathering in Little Rock and virtual sites across Arkansas.

Arkansas Baptist Disaster Relief responds to hurricane damage on the Gulf Coast seeing over 200 professions of faith during the relief effort.

October 17
Four new Hispanic church planters participate in an assessment event with the ABSC Church Planting Team that begins their process to starting a new church work.

With extensive safety precautions and adjustments, fall classes begin at Ouachita and Williams Baptist Universities with record fall enrollment at both schools.

JANUARY

FEBRUARY

MARCH

APRIL

MAY

JUNE

JULY

AUGUST

SEPTEMBER

OCTOBER

January 27-28
Hundreds of Arkansas Baptists gather at Geyer Springs FBC in Little Rock for ECON, the State Evangelism Conference.

Ouachita Baptist University and Williams Baptist University make modifications to in-person learning, most goes virtual.

ABN launches first edition of the new eMagazine, an online publication featuring stories from across Arkansas and the SBC.

May 1-8
Churches across Arkansas participate in Pray714, a seven-day focus on prayer and fasting leading up to the National Day of Prayer.

July 12-19
More than 80 churches participate in a virtual missions trip experience offered by the ABSC Missions Team.

Baptist Collegiate Ministries in over 30 campuses in Arkansas resume their fall schedule reaching college students through a variety of methods and capacities.

September 11
Eight new church planters participate in an assessment event with the ABSC Church Planting team that begins their process to starting a new church work.

Over 100 churches from almost every Association participate in One Day: Serve Local, a missions event with over 500 ministry sites across the entire state of Arkansas.

INSIDE

- ABSC Agency, Institution, and Team Reports
- How to Stay Connected
- Cooperative Program
- A Message from Our Executive Director (back cover)



ARKANSAS BAPTIST FOUNDATION CONTINUES TO MOVE FORWARD AND ENCOURAGE ARKANSAS BAPTISTS DURING UNPRECEDENTED TIME

As COVID-19 provided the opportunity to reevaluate, rethink, and refocus during this season of uncertainty, we were reminded that God has a wonderful plan for the Foundation as we move forward. We have

certainly attempted to do our part by maintaining 2020 ministry distributions in an effort to provide financial stability and tangible encouragement to our ministry partners.

This has been an intense stretch of ministry requiring both time and energy. We have spent countless hours assisting churches and entities with the CARES Act and more specifically the Paycheck

Protection Program. In fact, we have created a dedicated resource page on our website (abf.org/ppp) for our churches and ministries to reference.

Additionally, the Foundation hired Patrick Henry as Administration Coordinator, where he will serve as the primary point of contact regarding administration for ABSC churches and ministry teams. Patrick will specifically assist church plants, Delta Network churches, and churches experiencing transition. He will also work in conjunction with the Convention's business office in the area of administration. This addition to the Arkansas Baptist Foundation family culminated nearly two years of prayer and planning this impactful move forward.

During this unprecedented time, the strongest reminder we have received is the prompt to move the Foundation's ministry forward. This is not a time to "hunker down," not when our churches and entities need us in such clear and pronounced ways. It has also been a time of continued partnership with the Arkansas Baptist State Convention.

Therefore, the Foundation continues to move forward into what God has for us as we strive to:

- SERVE Arkansas Baptist churches and ministries,
- ADVISE in areas where our staff are gifted and equipped, and
- ENCOURAGE stewardship both corporately and personally whenever possible.



ARKANSAS BAPTIST CHILDREN'S HOMES & FAMILY MINISTRIES SERVE STATE'S VULNERABLE CHILDREN THROUGH A FAMILY OF FIVE MINISTRIES

God is the Faithful Father to the fatherless. This consistent message of Scripture is central to the Gospel. The fact that He allows us as Arkansas Baptists to take part in this special mission is a great honor. He has given this opportunity for more than 45,000 days, but not a single day is more important than this one for the Arkansas children currently in need of family. Throughout the year, we made efforts to maximize intentionality and streamline ministry with the mission to build, strengthen, and restore Arkansas families for God's glory. Five distinct ministries serve to fulfill this mission:



Connected Foster Care: A bridge to restoration for children in need of family.



Arkansas Baptist Homes for Children: Creating generations of change by keeping siblings together in a Christian environment.



Arkansas Baptist Ranch: A beautiful place of redemption for siblings from hard places.



Desired Haven Family Care: Building support systems for vulnerable families.



Living Well Counseling: Christian counseling for Arkansas families.

The vulnerable children and families of our state know that Arkansas Baptists love Arkansas Families.

ARKANSAS BAPTIST
CHILDREN'S HOMES &
FAMILY MINISTRIES

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ARKANSAS BAPTIST FOUNDATION

Since 1949, the Foundation has distributed more than

\$458 million

for God's work in Arkansas and around the world.

More than

60%

of the distributions this past year went to Arkansas Baptist agencies, churches, institutions, or ministries.

This past year alone, God has allowed the Foundation's staff to prepare legacy giving plans totaling over

\$100 million

For the 2019-20 school year,

269 scholarships

were approved to be awarded to Southern Baptist students totaling \$983,000.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM ABCH

Arkansas Baptist Children's Homes & Family Ministries provided the daily care for

348 children

in transition.

Through the year, we were able to celebrate safe and nurturing permanency for

139 children

41 of these children were able to go to the home of a safe family member.

29 were adopted into a new family.

69 were kept together with their family.

In addition to building these families, Living Well Counseling provided nearly

3,000 affordable Christian counseling sessions to children, adults, and families.

More than

20%

of the counseling sessions were provided to the ministry families of Arkansas Baptist churches.



MISSIONS TEAM FLEXES AMID TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS TO FOCUS ON MISSIONS, PRAYER, GIVING, AND LOCAL SERVICE

Flexibility has always been a key word associated with missions. 2020 has provided all of us ample opportunities to practice flexibility. Even as plans continue to be altered or postponed, we place great confidence in God Who knows all things and “is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine.”



Travel restrictions and health concerns forced many churches to postpone or cancel missions trips. Seizing this opportunity to develop new and innovative approaches for connecting Arkansas Baptists with missionaries and missions’ opportunities, a “Virtual Global Missions Week” was designed and launched July 12–19. More than 200 participants from 80+ ABSC

churches enjoyed the virtual experience where they were introduced to eight IMB missionary families representing each IMB Affinity.

Additional opportunities were developed for Arkansas Baptists to engage in prayer for IMB missionaries and UPGs, including:

- An online adoption process for South Asia UPGs (other Affinity UPGs to be added).
- Quarterly Zoom calls with Southeast Asia missionaries (South Asia to be added soon).
- Virtual Missions Connection (October–December) with eight NAMB/ABSC church planters.

COVID has not restricted disasters from occurring. Arkansas Baptist Disaster Relief has responded to tornadoes at Camp Siloam and in Jonesboro, Harrisburg, and Heber Springs. Teams have also been deployed in the aftermath of Hurricane Laura and Hurricane Sally. Partnering with the Arkansas Food Bank, DR teams transported 200,000 meals to Arkansas communities, food banks, hospitals, and schools.

The annual One Day: Acts 1:8 Missions Experience was postponed and One Day: Serve Local was developed. Online resources were provided, more than 115 ABSC churches registered and served their local communities at 500+ ministry sites, and at least 56 professions of faith were recorded.

Dixie Jackson materials were mailed to all ABSC churches and made available online. Thank you for your faithful giving to Dixie Jackson!



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MISSIONS TEAM

Virtual Global Missions Week

- 200+ participants from 80+ churches
- 70% of participants used Family Missions Discipleship resources and activities
- 40% participated in a Virtual Refugee Simulation
- 40% found a way to bless or serve an ethnic neighbor during the week

Arkansas Baptist Disaster Relief

- 676 volunteers deployed
- 337 chain saw jobs
- 211,112 meals served
- 529 Gospel presentations
- 235 professions of faith

Virtual Mission Connection

- October–December 2020
- 16 Zoom calls
- Featuring 8 NAMB/ABSC church planters
- Hawaii, Wyoming, Kansas, New Orleans, Puerto Rico, Arkansas



CHURCH PLANTING TEAM FOCUSES ON PARTNERSHIPS WITH ABSC CHURCHES THAT ARE COMMITTED TO DEVELOPING CHURCH PLANTERS

Since 1955, Arkansas has seen its population grow by 75%. During that same time period, the number of ABSC churches has grown by only 35%. To make a significant impact on lostness in Arkansas, we must simply plant more churches. We know this to be true because in 2019, our new



church starts recorded 911 professions of faith!

We also know that churches plant churches. This is an effective, biblical model that has led our team to evaluate and redesign our strategies. Over the last three years, we have been working with several established churches, developing a model or process to

identify future church planters, equip them in the context of a local church, and send them out from the body, locally, across the state, around the country, and to the ends of the earth.

In order to grow the number of church plants that begin with a strong foundation, we must multiply our team’s reach. This is being done through these church planting residencies where churches and leaders with a passion for church planting pour into planters throughout the beginning stages of their journey. In the last two years, ABSC churches went from having two church planting residencies across the state to now a total of five, with five more churches in various stages of setting one up.

The need is great in Arkansas. In order to plant more churches to reach new people, we must raise up new planters—local planters who are ready and equipped. With an increased focus on more extensive church partnerships and multiplying our reach through new church planting residencies, we believe God can do a mighty work in this state.



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE CHURCH PLANTING TEAM

20
new churches
in 2019

911
professions of faith

10
church planting residencies
by 2021



CHURCH HEALTH TEAM PIVOTS TO PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR CHURCH LEADERSHIP AND DISCIPLESHIP

Like many of you, the Evangelism and Church Health Team pivoted strongly in 2020, with a strategic shift away from events to heavier support ministry—more phone calls, more meetings online. From our thousands of conversations with you, one-on-one and in groups, here's what we saw...



- Isolation led to the establishment of leadership and support networks for pastors and leaders of various church ministries.
- Pastors and leaders from across the state shared challenges and ideas with one another, leading to Kingdom unity and advance all across Arkansas.
- Churches innovated, streaming worship services online and hosting

drive-in meetings in their parking lots.

- Deacons and leaders shared the load of church ministry with their pastors in unprecedented ways.
- The cancellation of camps provided extraordinary opportunity for families to spend intentional time together.
- Over 100 graduating high school seniors participated together in a virtual Super Summer experience.

Hundreds of pastors and leaders all across our state showed resilience, innovation, hope, and joy born from reliance on the Lord and faithfulness to our shared mission. You realized that while our methods had to shift, our mission never does. The Lord blessed the work of your hearts and hands. 2020 has indeed been a marker in history... not in the ways that we expected, but certainly in ways that highlight the power and sufficiency of the Gospel.

Arkansas Baptists, it is our joy to serve you, encourage you, collaborate with you, and celebrate you. What the enemy has meant for evil, God has meant for good. You have embodied the Gospel message in this year of suffering that brings joy. Through the death of many of our patterns and plans, God is bringing about a resurrection in Arkansas that shines a bright light before a darkened world.



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE CHURCH HEALTH TEAM

1,200

attended 2020 ECON.

100+

graduating high school seniors participated in a virtual Super Summer experience.

1,928

phone conversations ABSC staff had with pastors and church staff immediately following the pandemic shutdown

140+

Children's Ministry leaders connected through social media networks

70+

pastors and leaders enrolled in theological education through The Institute (formerly The Delta Institute) at five sites



COLLEGE + YOUNG LEADERS TEAM SUPPORTS BCM—FROM THE CHURCH, ON THE CAMPUS, FOR EVERY STUDENT

Reaching the next generation has never been more critical. But your gifts to cooperative missions through the Cooperative Program and Dixie Jackson Arkansas Missions Offering provide local Baptist Collegiate Ministries (BCM) on 35 campuses **to assist churches in reaching the next**

generation with the Gospel on the most strategic mission field in the world.



During the "typical" year of 2019, many churches looked to our BCMs to find camp staffers, student ministry resumés, supply preachers, and worship leaders. Additionally, churches depend on BCMs to be committed to on campus evangelism, hosting weekly worship experiences, encouraging churchmanship, developing leaders, mentoring disciples, and assisting with

resources for engaging the next generation.

But 2020 has been anything but typical! While ministering in an "online world" through Bible study and small groups, our BCM leaders also found themselves being:

- Crisis counselors to students when depression, anxiety, and suicide rates are skyrocketing.
- Comforters when football teams learned that their seasons are canceled.
- An encourager on a phone call to tired pastors facing a new reality.
- Significant contacts with international students experiencing extreme isolation.

They were uniquely positioned to be empathetic with the fears and frustrations of African American Students in a time of racial tension, and then, help those students consider the limitations of "a cultural movement" and the wholeness of a biblical worldview. They encouraged university administrators tasked to make THE DECISIONS and supported those decisions with integrity.

2020 has been anything but "typical" but rest assured, Arkansas Baptists, your BCM continues to reach the next generation for Christ. Your faithful giving and support have not waned and neither has our mission.



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE COLLEGE + YOUNG LEADERS TEAM

The College + Young Leaders Team represents

35 campuses

including 11 full-time ministries and 24 ministries with bivocational, volunteer, and stipend leaders.

23,884 impacted

by BCM outreach

2,766 students involved

in BCM

438 international students involved in BCM

392 salvations through BCM



ARKANSAS BAPTIST NEWS TRANSITIONS TO ALL-NEW ONLINE PLATFORM WITH INNOVATIVE AND TIMELY DIGITAL UPDATES

The *Arkansas Baptist News* (ABN) has been informing and engaging Arkansas Baptists since 1901. As the ABN enters a new chapter in its storied history, we remain committed to inspiring, informing, and involving Arkansas Baptists in this mission.



In 2020, the ABN has gone through significant changes and transition. Despite best efforts, subscription and advertising revenue continued to decline. Following a thorough financial feasibility study, in January 2020, the ABN Board of Trustees voted to dissolve the corporate entity and return the ministry of the ABN to the ABSC Executive Board. The ABSC Executive

Board of Trustees affirmed that vote, and the operations of the ABN were transferred to the ABSC Executive Board's Communications Team.

Under the leadership of the Communications Team, the ABN continued to publish its print newspaper until March 2020. In April, the ABN moved to an online news service publishing daily content on its website and social media platforms. Despite these transitions and changes, the publishing of news stories continued without interruption.

Since the transition in March, we have introduced several new innovations. In May, the ABN began publishing its biweekly, virtual magazine sent via email. The free eMagazine includes feature articles about ministry work happening in the state, perspectives from Baptist leaders, and other news in each edition. In August, a brand-new website was launched. The new site includes a fresh, modern appearance, an easy to navigate menu, stories that are categorized to allow readers to easily find the content they are interested in, and much more.

While this new structure is different, the future of the ABN is bright. We continue to develop new ways and strategies to accomplish the historic and ongoing purpose created long ago—to inspire, inform, and involve Arkansas Baptists.



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ARKANSAS BAPTIST NEWS

5,000

Arkansas Baptist subscribers to the biweekly eMagazine

On average

50

new Arkansas Baptist subscribers each month

Since April 2020, the ABN has featured over

200

original articles about ministry work in Arkansas.

Text

“ABN”

to

33777

to subscribe FREE to the eMagazine



WILLIAMS BAPTIST UNIVERSITY WELCOMES ENROLLMENT JUMP, LAUNCHES WILLIAMS WORKS INITIATIVE

Williams Baptist University launched a student work initiative which will make it possible for students to graduate debt-free, as well as notching a double-digit percentage jump in enrollment this fall.



WBU announced the Williams Works initiative last fall. The initiative will allow students to work 16 hours per week through the fall and spring semesters to have their tuition and fees covered, and students who work full-time through the summer can also cover their room & board. One element of Williams Works is Eagle Farms, where students plant, cultivate and harvest the crops, as well as market

the produce. Future plans call for the addition of agritourism elements, such as a fall festival, and the farm is currently expanding into other endeavors to provide jobs for students.

WBU is also utilizing community partners to provide jobs, including industries in the nearby Walnut Ridge Industrial Park, and WBU students are now managing the Hotel Rhea in downtown Walnut Ridge. Williams Works launched this fall with 44 students, and a similar number will be added next fall.

WBU's enrollment for the fall semester increased more than 12 percent over last year. On-campus head count this fall is 581 undergraduate students, with overall enrollment of 619. WBU has 220 freshmen on campus this fall, a record in the modern history of the university.

WBU is in the business of higher education to transform minds and hearts for the service of God. Williams is proud to be owned and operated by the Arkansas Baptist State Convention. It is our privilege to serve alongside Arkansas Baptists as we equip the next generation to make an impact for Christ.



HIGHLIGHTS FROM WILLIAMS BAPTIST UNIVERSITY

619 enrollment

Fall 2020

12%

enrollment increase since last fall

27%

enrollment increase over the last two years

44 students

in the inaugural class of Williams Works

16 hours

of work per week required of Williams Works students each fall and spring semester in exchange for tuition and fees



CAMP SILOAM FOCUSES NOT ON WHAT DIDN'T HAPPEN DURING YEAR OF CANCELLED CAMPS, BUT WHAT GOD HAS DONE DURING THE PAST 10 YEARS

People say they sense the presence of the Lord at Camp Siloam. The presence of the Lord is Camp Siloam's provision. Because of Arkansas Baptist's commitment to the Gospel going forward, God has provided through a season of catastrophes. He has provided through the Cooperative Program, generous individuals, and favor with our insurer, Church Mutual. There are still hills to climb and mountains to move, but Camp Siloam will open for summer camp in 2021. Summer camp is still the most effective tool of the church to reach kids with the transformative power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.



In a year of small things to celebrate, let us celebrate what God has done over a decade. Camp Siloam has always been a place where the lost are saved, where churches grow closer together and students are called to share the Gospel with the nations. Over the last 10 years, 47,097 campers have experienced a week of summer camp at Camp Siloam! See more highlights at right.

In a year of small things, let us celebrate the small things. This summer two campers chose to move from death to life by receiving Christ as their Savior. Who knows what these two will do for the Kingdom.

In September, Pat Moore, Director of Operations at Camp Siloam was reconnecting with missionary and friend, Mike Taylor. Over lunch, they discovered that Mike had been called to the ministry at Camp Siloam when he was a camper in June 1981.

Cancelling summer camp was the most difficult decision the Camp Siloam staff and Board of Trustees have ever had to make. In hindsight, it appears this was the correct decision. God is sovereign. We pray for an awakening. If the virus crisis is the beginning of a great awakening and a healing of our land, then Camp Siloam is poised to be ready for the harvest on the other side of the crisis.



HIGHLIGHTS FROM CAMP SILOAM

Over the past 10 years,

47,097 campers

have experienced a week of summer camp at Camp Siloam.

Of those campers

7,766

have made life changing commitments.

In the last decade,

3,781 campers

have made professions of faith.

749 campers

have been called to missions or ministry.

450 campers

have expressed an interest in baptism.



OUACHITA BAPTIST UNIVERSITY CONTINUES TO RISE DESPITE PANDEMIC

Even amid the uncertainties of the COVID-19 pandemic, Ouachita Baptist University is fully in-person this fall and has seen persistent growth and accolades in 2019-2020 while continuing to focus on a love of God and love of learning.



Ouachita's fall 2020 total enrollment is 1,704, its highest head count since 2000. This total reflects a new nursing program, a partnership with Baptist Health to address a shortage of 15,000 nurses in Arkansas; increased concurrent credit programs with Christian high schools; a new graduate internship in dietetics, a program few Christian colleges in

the nation offer; and the state's first full graduate program in applied behavior analysis, a leading therapy for disorders such as autism.

Ouachita's 4% increase in enrollment occurred even as total university enrollment in the state declined by 3.3%. Additionally, Ouachita reported its highest four-year graduation rate in history of 60.5% (compared to the recent state-wide average of 32%), and recent graduates report a 99% "placement rate," 15% higher than the national average.

These factors contribute to a range of accolades. For example, Ouachita again has been named #2 Best Regional College in the South by "U.S. News & World Report." According to CollegeConsensus.com, Ouachita has the top student satisfaction rating of any college in Arkansas, Louisiana or Texas. Niche.com also continues to rate Ouachita highly, including #2 rankings in the state for Top Private Universities and Most Conservative College.

"We genuinely believe every good gift comes from the Lord," said Dr. Ben Sells, Ouachita president. "We're thankful for our students and the support of their families. In the midst of a pandemic, our already incredibly committed faculty and staff redoubled their efforts. Finally, we're grateful to alumni, friends and Arkansas Baptists who provide difference-making support for Christ-centered higher education."



HIGHLIGHTS FROM OUACHITA BAPTIST UNIVERSITY

#2 Best Regional College

in the South
(U.S. News & World Report)

#2 Most Conservative College

in Arkansas (Niche.com)

1,704 enrollment

Fall 2020

36%

of freshmen have 4.0+ high school GPA.

23%

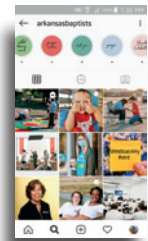
of freshmen are first-generation college students.

STAY CONNECTED.

Follow Arkansas Baptists on social media, sign up for FREE eNewsletters, and check out our websites and podcasts.



SOCIAL MEDIA



- Facebook
- Twitter
- Instagram
- YouTube
- Vimeo

E-NEWSLETTERS



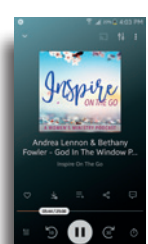
- ABSC eNews (monthly)
- ABN eMagazine (bimonthly)

WEBSITES



- ABSC.org
- ABN (ArkansasBaptist.org)
- ABSCDisasterRelief.org

PODCASTS



- Lead>Defend
- Inspire on the Go with Andrea Lennon
- The Grind

FOR MORE INFORMATION, GO TO ABSC.ORG/UPDATES

THE COOPERATIVE PROGRAM IS HOW WE AS ARKANSAS BAPTISTS IMPACT LOSTNESS.

Christ has commanded us to make disciples, and the need is great around our state, our nation, and our world. The missions and ministries represented in this ABSC Annual Report are made possible largely through the generous giving by Arkansas Baptists to missions through the Cooperative Program.



ARKANSAS 44.6%
of the population claims no religious affiliation.



NORTH AMERICA OVER HALF

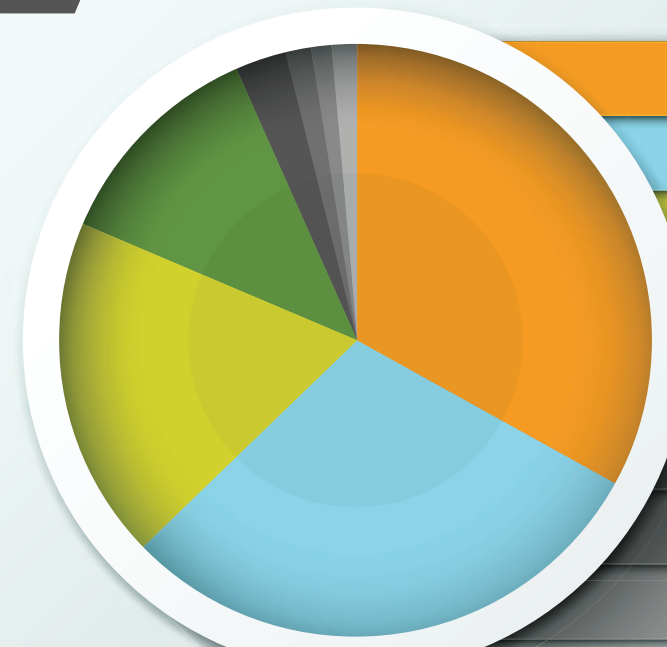
of the North American population lives in major metropolitan areas, such as New York City, where there is only one Southern Baptist congregation for every 62,500 people.



INTERNATIONAL

There are nearly **7,000 UPGs** (Unreached People Groups) around the globe.

HOW YOUR INVESTMENT IN MISSIONS IS DISTRIBUTED THROUGH THE COOPERATIVE PROGRAM



INTERNATIONAL & NORTH AMERICAN MISSIONS	\$6,981,963
ARKANSAS BAPTISTS TEAM MINISTRIES	\$6,264,031
ABSC CHRISTIAN HIGHER EDUCATION	\$3,875,846
ADDITIONAL SBC MINISTRIES	\$2,556,237
ARKANSAS BAPTIST CHILDREN'S HOMES	\$548,299
ARKANSAS BAPTIST FOUNDATION	\$320,967
CAMP SILOAM	\$238,136
ARKANSAS BAPTIST NEWS	\$214,521

2020



ABSC.ORG/CP

A MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

This year has really been a year like no other. You are likely getting tired of hearing that, but it rings true as it pertains to the Annual Meeting of our Arkansas Baptist State Convention. Through the long history of our Convention, this meeting has only been canceled, changed, or modified a small number of times for extreme circumstances. While I will greatly miss the chance to gather as a family for the 2020 Annual Meeting, modifying the meeting was the right decision. I give a sincere thank you to Manley Beasley Jr., our Convention President, and Doug Falknor, our Executive Board President, for serving during this unique time and operating in great wisdom.

I will miss the time this year that we as Arkansas Baptists get to connect with one another. I will miss the meaningful worship and encouraging messages we hear at the Pastors' Conference and the Annual Meeting. I will miss the momentum and energy that we leave with each year. I will miss the privilege of hearing of all the great ministry work that comes from the teams, agencies, institutions, and ministry partners from around the state and beyond.



Despite the unusual circumstances one thing has remained true—Arkansas Baptists' commitment to cooperative missions. Through missions giving and engagement, Arkansas Baptists have stood together to voice their desire to see Cooperative Program mission work continue across Arkansas, the United States, and the world. I am honored to tell you that we closed the month of September with Cooperative Program giving at 101% of anticipated budget, year to date. Additionally, churches across the state are continuing to give and participate in the Dixie Jackson Arkansas Missions Offering. The work this offering funds is vital to our state and ensures that we work together to advance the Gospel and impact lostness in Arkansas.

Arkansas Baptists, I wish I could say that things will return to normal soon. I do not know what the future holds with COVID-19 and other circumstances, but I do know this—we serve an incredible and faithful God. I applaud you for being flexible and doing what must be done to advance the Gospel. I thank you for the work you have done this year, the missions work you have supported, and your desire to impact lostness. Arkansas Baptists, you are the best folks in the world!

J.D. "Sonny" Tucker

J.D. "Sonny" Tucker
ABSC Executive Director