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For immediate release

Ouachita to host eighth annual Conference on Issues in Christian Counseling Feb. 23

By Katie Smith

February 14, 2018

For more information, contact OBU's news bureau at newsbureau@obu.edu or (870) 245-5208.

ARKADELPHIA, Ark.—Ouachita Baptist University's Pruet School of Christian Studies will host the eighth annual Conference on Issues in Christian Counseling on Feb. 23 in Walker Conference Center. This year's focus is "Issues in Marriage."

The conference is co-sponsored by Ouachita and New Orleans Theological Seminary, and a Pastoral Track is sponsored by the Arkansas Baptist State Convention. The early registration deadline is Feb. 19; costs will increase for late registrations. The conference is open to mental health professionals, social workers, pastors, current full-time students and any of their spouses.

"I think both pastors and therapists can expect to learn the latest treatment techniques in dealing with troubled marriages and can take home information which will aid them in helping individuals with marital problems," said Dr. Bill Viser, professor of Christian ministries at Ouachita and conference organizer. "I also think it will give them some fresh ideas on how to strengthen marriages. Certainly, it is important to not forget the children in troubled marriages, and we will have workshops that will focus on the role of children in marriage."

Eight hours of NBCC (National Board for Certified Counselors) credit has been approved for licensed alcohol and abuse counselors, professional counselors, marriage and family therapists, national career counselors, nursing professionals and social work professionals who attend the conference's Counseling Track. A certificate for these hours will be given when participants turn in an evaluation of the conference.

"There is a great need to understand problems that individuals and couples face in marriage. I am happy that we have specialists lined up to make presentations that will be educational as well as practical for both pastors and therapists," Viser explained. "Our conference is unique in that it unites both professional therapists and pastors together to dialogue with each other and to learn from each other. I feel like it brings together two very important sources of help for marriages in trouble, and it is also an opportunity for therapists and pastors to learn together and from each other."

The Pastoral Track will begin at 8 a.m. and feature four sessions, including:

- "Hope-Focused Marriage Counseling: An Introduction to Brief Therapy with Couples"—Dr. Aaron New
- "Living a More Excellent Way in Marriage"—James Hawkins
- "Counseling Couples in Crisis: A Starting Point for Pastors"—Garrick Conner
- "Helping Couples Resolve Conflict"—Derek Brown
- Question and Answer session on topics related to pastoral counseling—Arkansas Baptist Children's Homes counselor panel

The Counseling Track will also begin at 8 a.m. with a morning session, "Professional Networking to Improve Client Services," led by Dr. Larry Henderson. The next topic, "Unique Ethical Issues in Premarital, Marital and Family Work," will be led by Dr. Kathy Steele and Linda Littlefield and a two-session series. Dr. Viser will lead the lunch session, "The State of Affairs: How Children Hurt and How They Heal from Infidelity." For the last two sessions, participants can choose to attend any of the following sessions:

- “Building a Successful Faith-Based Marriage and Family: Observations, Myths and Research”—Dr. Ian Jones
- “Hope-Focused Marriage Counseling: An Introduction to Brief Therapy with Couples”—Aaron New
- “Let’s Talk about Sex(uality): Assisting Families to Have ‘The Talk’ in a Nashville Statement World”—Gerald Nissley
- “Treating the Whole Family”—Dr. Jeff Nave
- “The Culture of Families”— Dr. Elizabeth Kelly, OBU associate professor of sociology

Participants can register for the conference by Feb. 19 at www.obu.edu/icconf18. The registration fee includes up to eight NBCC clock hours, a Certificate of Attendance, handouts for the sessions, lunch and snacks. Registration is \$100 for mental health professionals and social workers, \$70 for pastors and \$20 for current, full-time students and any spouses attending. Late fees will apply after the deadline. For more information, contact Mary Farley at farleym@obu.edu.