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NEWS

For immediate release

Ouachita honors Jeff Thompson as Associational Missionary of the Year



Picture 1 Dr. Jeff Thompson (second from left) was named the 2017 Associational Missionary of the Year. Dr. Ben Sells (left), OBU president, presented the award. Also pictured are Susie Thomas and Dr. J.D. "Sonny" Tucker.

By OBU News Bureau

March 10, 2017

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

ARKADELPHIA, Ark. — Dr. Jeff Thompson, associational missionary for Concord Baptist Association, was named the 2017 Associational Missionary of the Year at a recent banquet hosted by Ouachita Baptist University. The banquet was held Feb. 21 during the annual Associational Missionaries Retreat at the Arkansas Baptist State Convention building in Little Rock.

The award – presented by Ouachita for 45 years as a way of honoring the service of Arkansas Baptist associational missionaries – is the highlight of the retreat sponsored by the ABSC.

Thompson received a plaque from Ouachita President Ben Sells and the book, *The Baker Illustrated Bible Handbook*, edited and largely written by Dr. Danny Hays, dean of Ouachita's Pruet School of Christian Studies, and Dr. Scott Duvall, the J.C. and Mae Fuller Professor of Biblical Studies in the Pruet School.

Thompson, who has served as associational missionary for Concord Baptist Association since 2007, told the crowd he was "incredibly appreciative" of his fellow associational missionaries. "Obviously, I'm just the guy that's standing up getting to receive for all of us," he noted. "Every one of you guys deserve this,

probably way more than I do.

"I appreciate Ouachita, your faculty ... for your many years of partnership in ministry," Thompson said, also expressing appreciation to Ronnie Toon, Associational Missionary Fellowship president and the 2016 winner of the award. "I never thought I would see the day the Associational Missionary of the Year award would go to a Williams (Baptist College) grad and an Oklahoma Baptist (University) grad," he added, prompting laughter from the crowd.

"By selecting and recognizing one person as Associational Missionary of the Year, we seek to honor the outstanding work of all associational missionaries throughout the state," Dr. Sells emphasized. "We understand and appreciate the important role that is played in the work of God's kingdom by you who wear this title, and we are thankful for the service you provide to local churches, pastors and the Arkansas Baptist State Convention,"

Thompson earned a bachelor's degree in business administration in marketing from Oklahoma Baptist University in 1988 and a Master of Divinity degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, in 1991. In 1996, he completed a Doctor of Ministry degree from Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Mo.

President Sells said that in the nine years of Thompson's leadership to the 59 churches in Concord Baptist Association, he has received "high praise" for the way "he ministers to pastors of his association."

"He hosts a lunch each Tuesday for the pastors. In addition to the fellowship they enjoy together, he provides programs, which include guest speakers and roundtable discussions that encourage and enhance their pastoral ministry," Sells said. "He has been a mentor to young pastors and has been instrumental in raising up new pastors for ministry. Others have described Jeff as one who loves to invest in young leaders. He has worked alongside older pastors, who appreciate his patient nature and practical leadership and recognize his wisdom and his vision for missions and ministry."

While in seminary, Thompson served as minister to youth at Royal Haven Baptist Church in Dallas, and pastor of Blue Baptist Church in Durant, Okla. He later served five years as pastor of First Baptist Church of Chelsea, Okla., where he and his wife, Susie, felt called to missions and were appointed by the Southern Baptist International Mission Board in 1997 to the Philippines where he served as a media and communications strategist.

Following a term with the IMB, Thompson served as pastor of Southwest Baptist Church in Ardmore, Okla., for five years before assuming the role of associational missionary of Concord Baptist Association.

Sells described Jeff and Susie Thompson an "effective team" who were "instrumental in leading the Acts 1:8 One-Day Mission Trip in Fort Smith."

Together, he said, the couple "helped organize and coordinate the various facets of this mission effort, which involved nearly 1,800 people, including 400 youth and children, (recording) 60 professions of faith ... along with numerous other decisions" during the event.

"Jeff and Susie led the follow-up for everyone who registered during the various activities of that weekend, and they made sure that the follow-up information was available to area churches by Saturday afternoon," he said, adding that the couple plans to hold a smaller scale Act 1:8 project in Concord Association next September.

"In addition to a God-honoring marriage," Sells said, "Jeff Thompson's effectiveness in ministry and in his service through Concord Baptist Association might be attributed to his simple philosophy of Christian living and Christian ministry and the guidance he found in three key Scripture passages: Matthew 28:16-20, Christ's Great Commission to all believers; Acts 1:8, Christ's promise of power from the Holy Spirit to be His witnesses; and 2 Timothy 2:2, Paul's admonition to Timothy about entrusting faithful leaders to teach others.

“The man we honor tonight possesses the qualities that are typical of all those who have been called to the important task of associational leadership,” Sells concluded. “It is a privilege for me to present the award for Associational Missionary of the Year to Jeff Thompson.”

Banquet participants were entertained by the Ouachita Baptist Horn Ensemble featuring Seth Daniell, a junior music composition major from Arkadelphia, Ark.; Hailey Whitham, a sophomore physics major from Rogers, Ark., and Dr. Heather Thayer, assistant professor of music in Ouachita’s School of Fine Arts.