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when I called,
You answered
me; You greatly
emboldened me.”

– Psalm 138:3 (NIV)

M BAPTIST Message

Newsjournal for Louisiana Baptists

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October 6, 2016

GBCC: A DREAM BECOMES REALITY



Brian Blackwell photo

(Above) A large crowd was on hand Sept. 27 for the dedication of the \$1.2 million, 8,400-square-foot Georgia Barnette Conference Center at Tall Timbers in Woodworth. (Right) Kay Kirkpatrick cuts the ribbon to open the new facility. Looking on are her two co-chair persons of GBCC steering committee, Linda David (left) and Glenda Hofius. LBC President Gevan Spinney and LBC Disaster Relief Coordinator Gibbie McMullan watch from behind.



New center will teach, train generations for missions

By BRIAN BLACKWELL

Message Staff Writer

WOODWORTH – A long-time dream finally became reality Sept. 27 when Louisiana Baptist staff, pastors, volunteers and other supporters who played a key role in the fundraising and construction of the Georgia Barnette Conference Center gathered on the grounds of Tall Timbers to dedicate the new facility.

Actual work began on the facility 14 months ago but the idea was visualized long before.

“This has been a buildup over about four years from vision to completion,” said John Hebert, missions and ministry director for Louisiana Baptists. “I’m grateful for all those who volunteered – over 250 volunteers -- and the hundreds and hundreds of donations. God bless you. We appreciate you so much.”

Since early 2013, the Louisiana Baptist Convention’s missions and ministry team led by Hebert has been raising money for the new center. They also have made hundreds of presentations to churches, Woman’s Missionary Union groups, individuals, missions education groups, various other audiences and at annual associational meetings.

The 8,400-square-foot facility was de-

See GBCC on 12

It’s never too late: Baptism gives 94-year-old new life

Todd Free, discipleship and administrative pastor at Cook Baptist Church in Ruston, baptizes Ophelia White, Sept. 11. White made a decision to follow Jesus Christ as her Lord and Savior at the age of 94.



By BRIAN BLACKWELL

Message Staff Writer

RUSTON – Wearing a shower cap only moments from entering the baptismal waters, Ophelia White was beaming with excitement.

With the encouragement of friends gathered in the Cook Baptist Church worship center, the 94-year-old new believer was baptized, answering the prayers of those closest to her.

“I want people to know it’s never too late,” White said. “Get with it.”

When she was a young girl, White’s mom urged her to go forward and ask to be baptized. Not fully realizing why she was doing so, White obliged and for decades believed she had a relationship with Christ.

But recently, roommate Joy Campbell noticed White lacked the confidence of Jesus in her life.

So, Campbell took a bold step and asked White if she knew Christ as her personal Lord and Savior.

For several weeks, Campbell continued the spiritual conversa-

See WHITE on 14

SBC president cautions, encourages at LBC conference, LC chapel services

BY BRIAN BLACKWELL
Message Staff Writer

PINEVILLE – Pastors in vibrant and successful ministries must guard against becoming prideful, or risk the fate of Nebuchadnezzar, Southern Baptist Convention President Steve Gaines

told attendees of the Louisiana Baptist Convention E4 Preaching Conference.

“God will humble the proud either in this life or in the next,” Gaines, pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in Cordova, Tenn., told the crowd gathered at First Baptist Church, Pineville, Sept.

20. “It might be in this life, in eternity, or in both – but ‘God will humble those who walk in pride.’

“Some of you are too proud for God to keep blessing you,” he emphasized at the annual event. “He’s about to cut you down. Don’t think He can’t, and don’t think He won’t.

Citing Daniel 4:1-37, Gaines recounted how Nebuchadnezzar was king of Babylon, the most powerful nation in the sixth century. Yet, despite warnings from God, the king became so selfishly proud of his nation he eventually was struck down with insanity. For seven years, Nebuchadnezzar lived outdoors like a beast of the fields, his hair uncut and fingernails and toenails grown out like talons.

Fortunately, Nebuchadnezzar finally looked up to God in repentance and admitted



Brian Blackwell photo

Southern Baptist Convention President Steve Gaines talks about the danger of pride during the 2016 E4 Preaching Conference Sept. 20

all his success was due to the Lord, Gaines pointed out. As a result, God forgave Nebuchadnezzar and restored him to his throne.

Gaines said the account of Nebuchadnezzar’s pride is a reminder that God’s warning confronts our pride, God’s discipline corrects our pride and God’s glory conquers our pride.

God cautions his people not to fall prey to pride, alerting them to confront this sin, Gaines said. God loves His children too much to let them walk in pride.

“Am I addressing a modern-day Nebuchadnezzar today?” Gaines said. “Has God given you a measure of success? Maybe you’ve done well vocationally, and

thus, financially. Your peers and colleagues have given you recognition, but you think you’re the one who has amassed your wealth.

“Have you grown into a tree taller than all the others?” he continued. “Let me warn you – walk in pride and God will chop you down. You can’t walk in pride and please God.”

LC CHAPEL

Later that morning, Gaines and pastors attending the E4 Conference joined Louisiana College students on campus for chapel services, during which Gaines offered an encouraging message

See GAINES on 6

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Newsboys, Newton headline 2016 Youth Evangelism Celebration

By **BRIAN BLACKWELL**
Message Staff Writer

LAFAYETTE – A Grammy and Dove-winning group and one of the premier nationally recognized youth speakers will headline this year’s Youth Evangelism Celebration at the Cajundome. Scheduled for Nov. 20-21, the largest annual gathering of Louisiana Baptists will feature Ed Newton, pastor of Community Bible Church in San Antonio, Texas, during all sessions.



Pastor Ed Newton

share their personal stories of how Christ changed them. Celebrating its 29th year, YEC’s theme will be Stories, based off 1 John 1:2-3.

Last year’s YEC drew 5,900 youth and resulted in 120 students making a profession of faith.

Another 174 recommitted their lives to Jesus, seven indicated a call to ministry and 83 made another type of decision. “There’s a reason church youth groups come back year after year,”

Maltempi said. “It’s a life-changing experience for the

students and youth leaders.”

The event kicks off 7 p.m., Sunday and ends 10:30 p.m., Monday.

Early registration, for only \$45 per person, is open through Nov. 1. After that date, the price will be \$50.

For Monday night only, seats can be purchased for \$25, which grants access only for that session and the Newsboys’ performance.

For more information, visit yeclouisiana.org.



Submitted photo

The Newsboys, a Grammy and Dove-winning Christian band founded in 1985, is the feature musical group for the 2016 Youth Evangelism Celebration Nov. 20-21 in Lafayette.

The conference will close with a time of music led by the Newsboys, a band formed in 1985 that includes former DC Talk vocalist Michael Tait.

Steve Maltempi, youth strategist for Louisiana Baptists, said that while YEC will feature a mix of Christian artists who have been around for decades, the conference also includes some new faces to Louisiana.

These include The Museum of Atlanta, Ga. who lead worship sessions, and Paul May, with the Clear Vision Drama Company of Springfield, Mo., who will perform drama.

Throughout the two-day event, Louisiana Baptist teenagers will be challenged to celebrate what Christ has done in their lives and to

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EDITORIAL: Hillary Clinton still snubbing Louisianans



Hillary Clinton Campaign photo

It has been a month and a half since the mid-August record rains, and 39 days after she declared her commitment to visit communities affected by the flooding. But, Hillary Clinton has yet to step foot in Louisiana.

By WILL HALL

Message Editor

ALEXANDRIA – Compassion is seen and not heard – it is doing something for someone else without the expectation of anything from anyone in return.

Unfortunately, it appears this concept is lost on the former secretary of state campaigning to be president.

As of the writing of this opinion piece, Sept. 29, it has been 46 days since the record rainfall in southern Louisiana caused widespread devastation, impacting an estimated 155,000 homes, many uninsured and a good portion of them destroyed.

Businessman and presidential candidate Donald Trump managed to visit the state within five days, and even donated a reported \$100,000 to relief.

President Barack Obama completed his golf vacation in Martha's Vineyard, first, but still came to Louisiana in nine days, offering personal comfort and federal aid.

But, a month and a half after the crisis, and 39 days after declaring "I am committed to visiting communities affected by these floods ... to discuss how we can and will rebuild together," Hillary Clinton has yet to show up and offer a single word of encouragement to even one of the nearly half million Louisianans impacted by the high waters.

Meanwhile, news reports document she attended 37 fundraising events in August that contributed \$143 million to her presidential campaign – including a \$33,400 per person event, Aug. 23, hosted by Hollywood A-list star Justin Timberlake, and "three events in 'tony towns' throughout the Hamptons" during the last weekend of the month, netting her an additional \$11 million and change.

Even today, she is in Chicago for multiple events reportedly raising a combined \$4 million.

But, so far, she's made no effort to be in Louisiana.

Unfortunately, her preferential treatment of the rich and famous is well-established.

The Associated Press released their findings that during her first two years, alone, as secretary of state, more than half of her non-government meetings were with donors to her family's charity, the Clinton Foundation.

Likewise, the Washington Examiner discovered she appointed 194 donors – individuals or members of groups who gave to her campaigns or family charity – to serve on advisory boards at the State Department, 40 percent of 511 such appointments during her tenure.

Louisiana is considered a red state, and Sec. Clinton possibly believes she has nothing to profit, politically, from making a stop here. But, continuing to snub the state reveals a character flaw that is unbecoming for someone who would seek the power and influence of the Oval Office. The title on the door reads, "President of the United States," and the duties include responsibility for the welfare of the whole country, and not just the special interests of those from whom he or she might have something to gain.

Mike Johnson: Faith, family & freedom motivate run for seat in U.S. Congress

By WILL HALL

Message Editor

ALEXANDRIA – "I am a Christian, a husband, a father, a life-long conservative, constitutional law attorney and a small business owner in that order," Louisiana Rep. Mike Johnson told the *Louisiana Baptist Message*, "and I think that order is important."

It reflects how his faith and his beliefs about family and freedom will influence his representation of Louisianans, if blessed to serve them in the U.S. House of Representatives, he said.

Johnson is a candidate for the open seat of the 4th U.S. Congressional District, and he has 20 years of *bona fides* in protecting and advocating key issues of faith, family and freedom – experience he can apply in Washington, D.C., if elected to this position, he said.

"Some people are called to pastoral ministry and others to music ministry, etc. I was called to legal ministry and

I've been out on the front lines of the 'culture war' defending religious freedom, the sanctity of human life, and biblical values, including the defense of traditional marriage, and other ideals like these when they've been under assault.

"As part of that work, I've been in and around the Louisiana legislature and other state legislatures, and the Congress, for many years," he said. "I've drafted legislation and defended it in courts. I've been there to speak with legislators and to testify."

A look at Johnson's courtroom experiences shows a depth of background many would envy.

He has successfully litigated legal actions from California to New York in federal courts at the trial and appellate levels, including major landmark cases about rights of religious expression on school campuses and in the public square.

One of the most highly visible victories he achieved

was winning a unanimous vote from the Louisiana Supreme Court in 2004 while defending the Louisiana Marriage Amendment, passed by 78 percent of voters to protect marriage as the union of a man and a woman. He successfully defended the same measure a decade later at the federal level, before the U.S. Supreme Court overturned all voter-approved state marriage laws with its ruling in *Obergefell v. Hodges* that purports to redefine marriage.

In the Louisiana legislature, he has been a pro-life champion, successfully shepherding important right-to-life bills through the process to become laws.

He also has fought to defend the state's citizens from additional tax burdens during this downturn in the economy.

Likewise, he has been a banner carrier for military service members, police and firefighters, and lists proposed Amendment 4 on the November 8 ballot as one of his



Mike Johnson campaign photo

State Rep. Mike Johnson, a Republican from Bossier City, says his faith and his beliefs about family and freedom will influence his representation of Louisianans if he is elected to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives in November.

favorite bills this year. This measure would provide a property tax exemption on the family home for the spouse of any of these public servants who lost their lives in the line of duty.

"It is an important issue for the state to take the lead on," Johnson said.

Johnson describes himself as a "full-spectrum conservative" and is proposing a slate of initiatives he will tackle in Congress, including illegal immigration, national defense and infrastructure improvements.

"Everyone recognizes na-

tional security is a big issue, getting control of our border again – for our economy and public safety," Johnson offered. "But the economy is the one big issue impacting everyone."

In that regard, Johnson sees accountability for lawmakers on issues such as Obamacare as one way to rein in overspending and overtaxing.

"One of the first bills I intend to file would require every member of Congress and their families to receive

See JOHNSON on 12

John Fleming: Faith makes lawmaking decisions easier

By WILL HALL

Message Editor

ALEXANDRIA – “Whether it’s national defense, right-to-life or the protection of First Amendment rights,” Rep. John Fleming told the *Baptist Message*, “it’s my personal faith, my belief in Jesus Christ as my Savior and what I think he wants me to do that guides me in my decision-making.”

Fleming, who represents the 4th U.S. Congressional District in Louisiana, hopes to employ these same values as a U.S. Senator, vying as one of 24 candidates who have filed to replace the retiring Sen. David Vitter.

But, for now, he is a member of the powerful House Committee on Armed Services, which has oversight for such matters as the defense budget (including defense acquisition programs), national security issues related to atomic energy, and contingency operations in the global

war on terrorism.

He also holds a coveted leadership position as chairman of the Subcommittee on Water, Power and Oceans for the House Committee on Natural Resources, and guides policy and programs relating to such issues as fisheries management, hydroelectricity generation by federal water projects, and even U.S. participation in the U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea (which defines the rights and responsibilities of nations with respect to use of the world’s oceans).

Both committees handle complex issues on strategic policy, and deliberate on important matters dealing with the day-to-day lives of Americans, but Fleming says he has peace in making most decisions because of his faith.

“Many members sometimes wring their hands,” he said, “wondering, what’s the right thing to do.”

“Virtually all my decisions are guided by my faith,”

Fleming explained.

Because of his faith, he has not limited himself just to giving leadership on defense and natural resources, but also has taken up the mantle to champion pro-life causes in the House.

He has submitted or supported bills to: protect health entities that decline to provide, pay for or refer for abortions; defund Planned Parenthood, the largest U.S. abortion provider; prohibit public funds from paying for abortions; and require parental consent as a measure to prevent young girls from being transported across state lines for abortions.

“Protecting life from conception to natural death is a foundational principle for me,” Fleming said.

But he said he also has a special place in his heart for U.S. military men and women.

“Soon after I came to Congress in 2009, I began hearing all these reports of military



Facebook photo

Rep. John Fleming, who represents the 4th U.S. Congressional District and lets his faith guide him in decisions, speaks before a key vote in the U.S. House of Representatives. He is one of 24 candidates vying for retiring Sen. David Vitter’s seat.

chaplains who were told they couldn’t utter the name of Jesus in a prayer, or they had to have their prayers pre-approved by the command,” he said.

Fleming said he heard instances of someone being fired for having a Bible on his

desk, and in one incident, an Air Force member was threatened by his lesbian supervisor for not endorsing her lifestyle.

“It wasn’t a matter of him having to be quiet about it,” Fleming said. “She actually

See FLEMING on 6

PREVENTING ADDICTION

By: **John Fleming, MD**

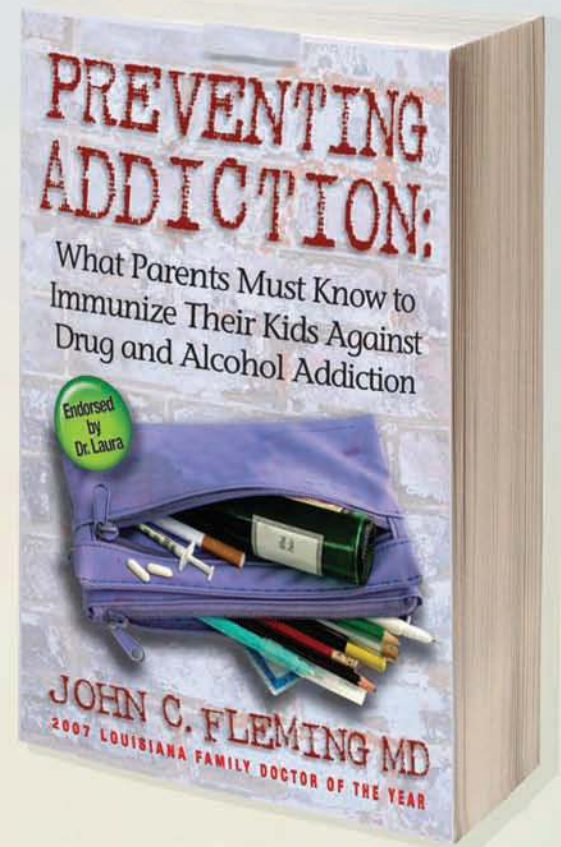
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Fleming from page 5

wanted him to be openly supportive and vocal in his support, and he just couldn't do that because of his religious beliefs."

Fleming said he was one of several congressmen who worked to include language in the National Defense Authorization Act FY2104 requiring the accommodation of individual expressions of religious belief by service members. Measures also were added to protect chaplains' prayers from restrictions and to allow them to exercise the tenets of their faith.

"There's never a wrong time to do the right thing," he underscored, adding that the legislative wording gives base commanders "political and legal cover" to push back against atheistic groups who try to hinder service members from exercising the religious beliefs they hold dear.

"My earliest upbringing and training – my earliest memories – are of being in Sunday school and Vacation Bible School and being in church and learning values, learning principles that align so closely with those of our Founding Fathers," Fleming

said in summarizing his legislative philosophy. "For me, it's important to live by those basic principles that I was trained up to believe – that we have a set of laws based on the Ten Commandments, and that those are still as important, as relevant, today as they were about 3,500 years ago.

"As long as we stay true to the important values and principles that this nation was built on – and the core of its existence, the Constitution – I think we'll stay on the right pathway and we'll end up in the right place," he offered. "Our laws, both secular and religious are based on the same common tenets.

"Given all those things, I think it's important that the decisions I make -- both as a congressman, now, and hopefully as a senator – are going to be guided by those basic principles that I've always come to embrace and love."

John and his wife Cindy, members of First Baptist Minden, have been married for 37 years and have four children and three grandchildren.



Brian Blackwell photo

SBC President Steve Gaines, pastor of Bellvue Baptist Church in Cordova, Tenn., encourages a crowd of mostly Louisiana College students to become men and women of God as he spoke during the Sept. 20 chapel service.

Gaines from page 2

on soul-winning and spiritual leadership, exhorting the undergraduates to exert their influence on campus, in the city of Pineville, and beyond. Gaines told the young

scholars one day they will have to give an account to Christ and urged them to live a life that pleases God.

"Don't just be a man," he said. "Be a man of God. Don't just be a woman. Be a woman of God."

E4 CONFERENCE

Before and after the LC chapel services, the conference held breakout sessions at First Pineville – led by professors from Louisiana College, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

The First Pineville Praise Team led worship by song during general sessions.

Many of those in attendance for this yearly conference were repeat participants, taking advantage of the encouragement and tools that help to equip them for ministry.

"You get to learn new stuff

and further your education, which is important for pastors," said T.J. Boyd, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Natchitoches. "I always pick up new ideas on church leadership and how to be a better preacher from the pulpit."

Scott Breland, pastor of Plainview Baptist Church in Bogalusa, echoed the thought.

"As pastors, we are charged with encouragement and discipleship of our members," he said. "Sometimes our tank gets empty and we really need a conference like this to refill."

The E4 Conference began in 2009 with a vision to exemplify, encourage, equip and empower our pastors to preach expositional sermons. Past speakers have included Don Wilton, pastor of First Baptist Church in Spartanburg, SC; Fred Lowery, pastor emeritus of First Baptist Church in Bossier City; and David Uth, pastor of First Baptist Church in Orlando, Fla.

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LC taps world class specialists for first 'Values & Ethics' conference

BY NORM MILLER

LC News

PINEVILLE – Louisiana College assembled a world-class panel of bio-ethicists for its first annual “Values & Ethics” conference, Oct. 10-11.

Slated to meet in LC’s Martin Performing Arts Center, the Oct. 10 session at 6 p.m. is free and open to the public and features nationally acclaimed author/scholars Dr. Ben Mitchell and Dr. Douglas Axe.

Local health care specialist Mary Kienzle, MSW, of Christus St. Francis Cabrini Hospital completes the trio that will explore the interesting parallels between society’s view of origins and a rapidly changing culture.

Subtitled “Origins,” the conference offers Cenla residents “the rare opportunity to hear from three top-flight experts whose credentials are as impressive as their content is stimulating,” said Louisiana College president, Dr. Rick Brewer.

Former director of Social Services for New York State, Kienzle brings more than 30 years of experience in health care.

A graduate of New York University and Hunter College, Kienzle is director for Missions Integration Services and Spiritual Care Departments at Christus Cabrini Hospital, which is sponsoring the conference.

Author Doug Axe earned a

PhD in bio-chemical engineering from Caltech and completed post-doctoral studies at Cambridge, where he worked with Nobel Laureate Max Perutz.

Published in numerous academic journals, Axe’s latest book is titled “Undeniable: How Biology Confirms Our Intuition that Life is Designed.” In 2005, Axe founded The Biologic Institute in Redmond, Wash., a non-profit research organization developing a new approach to biology with the hypothesis that life is by design.

Bio-ethicist C. Ben Mitchell earned a PhD in medical ethics from the University of Tennessee.

He completed residencies at UT Knoxville and Vanderbilt University. He is a consultant with the Center for Genetics & Public Policy at Johns Hopkins University, and is co-director for, and fellow of the Biotechnology Policy in Washington, DC.

A frequent interviewee for radio and television, Mitchell is widely published in other national media and journals. His latest book is titled “Biotechnology and the Human Good.”



Ben Mitchell



Douglas Axe



Mary Kienzle

Mitchell is provost and academic vice president at Union

University in Jackson, Tenn. Each of the speakers is also scheduled for lectures in various classes at LC.

University in Jackson, Tenn.

Each of the speakers is also scheduled for lectures in various classes at LC.

“This group of stellar scholars and cutting-edge specialists provides our students exposure to

the kind of academic expertise that is the heritage of Louisiana College,” Brewer said. “Professionals and students in the fields of medicine and other sciences, as well as educators, business leaders, pastors and the general public should avail themselves of this superb opportunity on Oct. 10.”

LC will livestream the conference from its website: www.lacollege.edu.

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7103 DeSiard Street
Monroe, LA 71203
DOM - Jerry Price

Tuesday, October 18 pm, 2016
6:00 - 8:30pm
Louisiana Baptist Building
Memorial Room
1250 MacArthur Drive
Alexandria, LA 71309

Wednesday, October 19, 2016
1:00 - 3:30pm
Beauregard Baptist Associational Office
735 West Drive
DeRidder, LA 70634
DOM - Tim Patrick

Thursday, October 20, 2016
2:00 - 4:30pm
Evangeline Baptist Associational Office
3000 West Pinhook Road
Lafayette, LA 70508
DOM - David Carlton

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LOUISIANA BAPTISTS

Flood strengthens the faith of Cross Creek member

BY TAMMY SHARP
Regional Reporter

ZACHARY – Peace of mind for many here has been swept downstream.

Not so for Cross Creek Cowboy Church member Melinda Michiels, who lost almost everything she owned when the Comite River, usually calm and shallow, spilled over its banks in August.

“I lost stuff, but I gained a lot. You have things in your heart you don’t even realize until God pulls it out and waves it in your face,” said Michiels. “I know I have Cross Creek, I know I have God, but now I don’t have as much stuff.”

“We were meeting in the Cowboy Church in the arena before we got our building,” remembers Debi Morris about the first time she met Michiels. “She drove up a couple years ago on her tractor and said, ‘If God puts a church in your front yard you might ought to check it out.’”

“She didn’t know what she believed,” said Morris, whose son Josh preaches at Cross Creek. But over the last two years, through Cross



Submitted photo

Despite losing almost everything in the mid-August flood, Melinda Michiels, a member of Cross Creek Cowboy Church, saw her faith in God grow and her love for her church strengthen.

Creek services, Bible study and mentoring, Michiels has come to a firm belief, as evidenced by her reaction to the flood.

“It didn’t cross my mind that He would leave me hanging out there,” said Michiels.

As the rain pelted down, water rose high and fast August 13.

Friend Liz Markey, of Zachary First Baptist, stopped by Michiels’ house and became stuck in the driveway. Leaving her dogs in the car, Markey navigated

to Michiels’ house on her walker through two inches of water.

Twenty minutes later Michiels went back for Markey’s dogs, but the water had risen and the current had become so strong that it swept Michiels off her feet, forcing her back to the house, where Markey called 911.

In the meantime, three men for whom Michiels had been keeping horses arrived and had to swim part way and then link arms to withstand the current in order to get to the horses, standing in water up to their bellies.

Once the horses were secured, the men came back for Markey’s dogs. But one man was swept off his feet and floated downstream before getting caught on a bush, said Michiels, who was able to throw him a rope.

But the men could not safely get Markey out of the house, so the women waited with their five dogs as the water continued to rise.

“There really wasn’t much else to do, except watch it,” Michiels said. And she was amazed at what floated by: islands of ants; the wishing well in her yard; her pontoon boat; a small mole; and spiders. “There were a lot of spiders in the water. I was anxious to get out of there.”

As they waited, Markey sat downstairs with her dog on the bed because she could not navigate the stairs. Meanwhile, Michiels stayed upstairs with the remaining dogs. They both prayed.

“Things would crash, and

I’d holler down ‘Liz was that you or furniture?’ And she’d holler back that she was fine, it was just furniture,” Michiels said.

Then at 3 a.m., rescuers arrived. Michiels went downstairs, swimming through the kitchen with her chocolate lab to let them in, but the door was stuck.

Water rushed in when she opened a window. But she managed to climb out, fighting from being carried away by the current.

Ultimately, the firemen came to her back door in a bass boat and took Michiels and Markey to a nearby church, The Rock, where they were welcomed with open arms and dry clothes.

However, relief was short lived because within 30 minutes rising water forced everyone to be evacuated to Zachary First Baptist.

“I can’t say enough about how brave everyone was,” Michiels said. “And I knew Cross Creek Cowboy Church had my back and were praying for me.”

Now, wading through the recovery process, Michiels is living with her sister and brother-in-law, using one of their vehicles to get around. “They’ve been an unbelievable blessing to me,” she said.

“Two years ago she didn’t have that faith,” said Debi Morris. “Instead of being bitter, she’s able to see that God has provided. She has a place to live and a car. God is just really working in her life. The flood has caused her faith to get stronger.”

Sam Moore, Evangelistic Ministries

479-381-1170, sam@evangelistsammoore.com

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Harvest Initiative, leaner CP budget top Executive Board agenda

By BRIAN BLACKWELL
Message Staff Writer

Louisiana Baptists will be operating on a leaner Cooperative Program budget in 2017.

During its September meeting, the Executive Board approved the Business and Finance Committee's recommendation for the 2017 Cooperative Program Budget of \$20,043,331, a decrease of \$550,435 from 2016.

The budget will be brought to messengers for approval during the 2016 Louisiana Baptist Convention Annual Meeting at Calvary Baptist Church in Alexandria.

The allocation between SBC and LBC causes remains unchanged, with 63.26 percent going to ministries in the state and 36.74 percent forwarded to SBC causes.

The portion of the budget which funds the LBC ministries will be \$12,679,411, a decrease of \$348,205 from the 2016 allocation.

"The CP allocation budget is based on receipts received

from August 2015 through July 2016," said Dale Lingenfelter, business and information services director for Louisiana Baptists. "Our state is facing several economic challenges that are affecting the budgets of our churches which in turn, affects our cooperative missions and ministries.

"The budget projected for 2017 is basically the same as our 1999 budget, even though the percentage forwarded to our SBC partners is greater than it was in 1999," he said. "We continue to receive positive feedback from pastors and churches regarding our cooperative efforts and are confident that as the economy improves, the gifts from the churches will also increase."

HARVEST INITIATIVE

While the CP budget will be reduced, Louisiana Baptists still have much to celebrate for the near future.

Wayne Jenkins, evangelism director for Louisi-

ana Baptists, expressed his excitement to Executive Board members about one of the largest joint efforts for evangelism ever in the state. The end goal of this Harvest Initiative is to involve at least 700 churches to pray for and share Christ with every household in Louisiana.

For this to happen, Jenkins said pastors must take the lead and enlist their members to participate in what could be a major catalyst for spiritual awakening.

"What would this state be like if every single house was prayed for, everybody would be shared with?" Jenkins said. "It can be done if we all do it together."

After spending 2016 planning and enlisting leaders and churches, and using 2017 to conduct statewide evangelism training and piloting different initiatives, Louisiana Baptists will join together across the state in 2018 to reach the lost via door-to-door outreach and mass evangelism events.

Churches will pray for ev-

ery home and share the Gospel with every person, and the effort will include multiple approaches such as one-on-one evangelism, multi-church crusades, single-church revivals and other harvest events which take advantage of compassion ministries to share about the love of Christ.

This Harvest Initiative is an outgrowth of the 2020 initiative affirmed by messengers during the 2014 Louisiana Baptist Convention Annual Meeting. The goal is to reach every generation and every people group in Louisiana with the Gospel by the year 2020.

Among the 10 actions identified in the 2020 initiative is the charge to equip churches with a proven evangelistic growth process, which the Harvest Initiative seeks to accomplish.

Planning for this statewide evangelistic effort began in late 2015, after Louisiana Baptist Convention Executive

Director David Hankins and LBC President Gevan Spiney announced 2017 and 2018 would be years of harvest. A group of 12 Louisiana Baptist pastors, evangelists, directors of missions and state evangelism and church growth staff met for early planning sessions.

There are 90 members now composing nine teams who are discussing ideas to include in an evangelism manual on how to share the Gospel and coordinate a harvest event. Prayer, outreach activities, discipleship and sermon ideas also will be covered.

This fall, the enlistment of 700 churches will begin.

DISASTER RELIEF

Another movement to share the Gospel in the state already is taking place.

See BOARD on 13

YEC
2016

STORIES

1 JOHN 1:2-3

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Ladies are needed for the Louisiana Baptist Children's Home, Monroe, LA, to serve in HomePlace, a transitional living ministry for homeless children and their mothers. The full-time position includes salary, housing, life and medical insurance, annuity, paid vacation, and training. Provide love, care, and hope in Christ to children and families in need. Both full-time and part-time positions require 24-hour work schedules.
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SBC Pastor's Conference selects NOBTS Caskey Center as strategic partner

By GARY D. MYERS
NOBTS Communications

NEW ORLEANS – The Caskey Center for Church Excellence at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary will serve as a strategic partner for the 2017 Southern Baptist Convention Pastors' Conference in Phoenix.

The partnership will include financial and logistical support. NOBTS President Chuck Kelley announced the partnership to the school's faculty in early September.

"The Caskey Center for Church Excellence at NOBTS is delighted to partner with the 2017 SBC Pastors' Conference in Phoenix to highlight the role of the smaller membership church in Southern Baptist life," Kelley said. "We are passionately committed to encouraging all pastors to make excellent biblical exposition in the church and consistent Gospel conversations with those outside the church the building blocks of their ministries."

The news follows the election of Dave Miller, pastor of Southern Hills Baptist Church in Sioux City, Iowa, and editor of the SBC Voices blog, as the president of the 2017 Pastors' Conference.

Typically a position reserved for larger church pastors, Miller ran on a platform emphasizing expositional preaching and celebrating the contributions of smaller churches in the SBC.

Miller's church, which averages around 200 in worship, is in good company. Eighty-nine percent of the convention's 47,000

See CASKEY on 12

LOUISIANA NOTABLES

ON THE MOVE

- Billy Minyard is the new pastor at First Baptist Church of Head of Island.
- Jason Dyess is the new music minister at Pine Grove Baptist Church, Livingston.
- Russell Zwerner has resigned as pastor of Victory Baptist Church, Walker.
- Ricky Cummings has resigned as pastor of First Baptist Church, Slidell.
- Dan Munson has resigned as pastor from First Baptist Church, Albany.
- Kyle Peters resigned as pastor at Cherry Ridge Baptist Church, Bastrop to accept a position in Texas.
- Bonita Baptist Church, Bonita: Ken Ronaghan is serving as interim pastor.

HOMECOMING

- Pine Hill Baptist Church, Sicily Island: 108th Homecoming, Oct. 9. Music by Dogwood Cross, 10 a.m., followed by the service at 11 a.m. Lunch on the grounds will follow the service. Speaker: Wayne Sibley. Pastor: Harrell (Bubba) Tucker.
- Humble Baptist Church, Glenmora: Homecoming, Oct. 9, 10 a.m. Dinner on the grounds will follow after the service. Everyone is welcomed to attend. Pastor: Joey Ducote.
- Mound Baptist Church, Tallulah: 56th Homecoming, Oct. 13, 10:30 a.m. Dinner on the grounds will follow after the service. Speaker: Jay Simms, former pastor. Everyone is welcomed to attend. Pastor: Doug Hughes.
- New Bethel Baptist Church, Arcadia: Homecoming, Oct. 16, 10:30 a.m. Speaker: Eddie Balance. Pastor: Steven Beard.
- Bosco Baptist Church, Monroe: 83rd Homecoming, Oct. 16, 10 a.m. Lunch will follow the service. Special Music: Heaven's Echoes will be singing after lunch. Pastor:
- Bethany Baptist Church, Clinton, in the Baywood Community: 126th Homecoming, Oct. 16, 10:30 a.m. with lunch to follow. Speaker: George Threeton. Worship/Music Leaders: Roy Moran and Dale and Rhonda

Inman. Friends and family of present and former members are invited. A nursery will be provided. Pastor: Caleb Smith

■ Ouachita Baptist Church, West Monroe: Homecoming, Oct. 23, 10:45 a.m. & 6 p.m. Speaker: Mike Holloway will bring the message in the morning service and Ray Mears on Sunday night. "Dinner on the Ground" will follow the morning worship. Pastor: Mike Holloway.

REVIVAL

- Horseshoe Baptist Church, Mer Rouge: Revival, Oct. 9-12, Sunday, 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. Monday-Wednesday, 7 p.m. Speaker: Greg Pierce, Association of Ashley County Baptist Association in Arkansas. Pastor: Bob Lonadier.
- Harmony Baptist Church, Deville: Family Crusade and Revival, Oct. 15-20, 6:30 nightly. Speaker: Casey Johnson. Music: Brad Mount and 2 Talk4 2 Ministries.
- Ouachita Baptist Church, West Monroe: Tent Revival, Oct. 24-26, 6 p.m. nightly on the corner of Highway 3033 and Caples Road in West Monroe. Speaker: Monday, Bill Robertson; Tuesday, Joe Aulds; Wednesday, Joey Lisemby. Music: The Lisemby Family. Pastor: Mike Holloway.

LAGNIAPPE

- North Shreve Baptist Church, Shreveport: Pumpkin Patch Community Outreach, Oct. 6-Oct. 31. There will be a huge Art & Crafts Fair on Sat. Oct. 8, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. The Pumpkin Patch is the most festive patch in area, so families are invited to bring a camera. There will be several different areas set up for photos. All vendors interested in participating call the church office at 318.425.2350 for a vendor application. See you at the patch. Pastor: Roy W. Davis.
- Dan Munson is available for pulpit supply, revivals and winter bible studies. Contact him at 985.351.6005 or at P.O. Box 1174 Albany La.
- First Baptist Church, Ponchatoula: Live 2 Lead Simulcast, Oct. 7, 8-11:30 a.m. This simulcast is a lead-

er development experience designed to equip church leaders with new perspectives, practical tools and key takeaways. Registration is at 7:50 a.m. Speakers: John C. Maxwell, Liz Wiseman, Dan Cathy, and Simon Sinek. Cost: Early bird price of \$35 ends Sept. 28. Cost is \$50 after Sept. 28. Group and student discounts are available. Tickets may be purchased online at www.fbcponchatoula.com. For more information contact Josh Dickson (minister of discipleship) at jdickson@fbcponchatoula.com or by calling 985.386.3075. Pastor: David Cranford.

- Pine Grove Baptist Church, Livingston: Eastern Louisiana Baptist Association 174th Annual Meeting, Oct. 10, 5 p.m. registration & mission fair; 6 p.m., annual meeting. Speaker: Rick Brewer, president of Louisiana College. Director of Missions: David Brown.
- Northshore Baptist Association: Fields of Faith Evangelism Rally Oct. 10, 6 p.m. Southeastern Louisiana Strawberry Stadium, Hammond.
- Ebenezer Baptist Church, Jonesboro: North Central Baptist Association Concerts of Prayer, October 16, 7 p.m. Churches in both Jackson and Winn Parishes – EBC, Weston, Vernon, Chatham, Caney Lake, Eros Mt. Olive and Midway – will unite for a combined prayer service in anticipation of next year's evangelistic crusades. Pastor: Randy Lee.
- Bienville & Webster-Claiborne Baptist Association: Malachi, suggested January Bible Study Workshop, Oct. 20, 8:30 a.m. – noon; Camp Harris Baptist Encampment. Speaker: Wayne Van Horn. Cost: \$10 (covers breakfast, lunch and notes from Van Horn. No cost for area pastors. Continental breakfast, 8:30 a.m.; teaching begins, 9 a.m.; lunch, noon. If more time is needed, a "lagniappe" afternoon session will be held. Director of Missions: Barry Joyner and Randy Hales.
- North Monroe Baptist Church, Monroe: Night of Hope Gospel Music event to benefit St. Jude's Research Hospital, Oct. 21, 7 p.m. Groups include the Talleys, 11th Hour, Bowling Family, Allen Family and more. Tickets include a meal (served from 5:15-6:20 p.m.) For ticket information, call 318.303.3830. Pastor: Bill Dye.

Louisiana Baptist FOUNDATION



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Cindy Mitchell was selected for August. She directed \$1000 to her church, Maple Springs Baptist Church in Logansport, to help with expenses related to a recent building project.

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Scripture Crypto

The Scripture Crypto is a Bible verse in which one letter has been substituted for another, thus encoding the verse. To find out what the verse is, you must determine what each letter is a substitute for. An "a," for example, may stand for a "t" in this week's issue of the ScriptureCrypto. Next week, "a" could stand for a "d." Each week, each letter is different. Solve by trial and error. The answer will be given next week. Note: All numerals, such as those in the scripture reference after the verse, are spelled out.

piw sbaja qbbc qvj ebija bo nbajmv gxqv vxs:

obh vj vpw aqhpxqr agbhi qvj tvxuwjhi bo

xahpju, aprxid, dbw gxuu alhjur yxaxq rbl; piw rj

avpuu tphhr lm sr ebija pgpr vjitj gxqv rbl.

Jkbwla qvxhqjji:ixijqjji

Clues:
Q = T; B = O

Answer to September 22 Scripture Crypto:
Second Corinthians eleven: sixteen

Johnson from page 4

their healthcare only at VA hospitals," he said. "The debate would highlight an important point that our veterans are not treated with the respect and dignity they deserve, and are not receiving the proper benefits they've earned. Yet, members of Congress live relatively like kings. It's upside down and needs to

change.

"I also would like to pursue legislation to require a record vote before Congress receives a pay raise. Currently, an annual raise is added automatically," he explained. "I think members should be required to vote publicly on the matter, so people back home would know."

Johnson said he also would like to lead the effort to overturn the 1950s-era Johnson Amendment and restore freedom in America's pulpits to speak openly about political matters.

Additionally, he hopes to make unelected bureaucrats accountable, with the goal of controlling regulations that stifle economic growth.

Importantly, he sees his priorities in terms of his commitment to the guiding principles of faith, family and freedom.

"My faith is very real to me," Johnson said, "and God is ever present in my life. I'm a committed Christian and my faith informs everything I do."

"My values follow the model of our Founding Fathers, I believe, and I think this is important" he said in closing. "We were established as one nation under God. We are perilously close to forgetting that principle now – and we desperately need to return to this fundamental understanding."

Johnson and his wife Kelly have been married for 17 years and they have four children – two sons and two daughters.

They are members of First Baptist Church in Bossier City.



Brian Blackwell photo

More than 250 people attended the dedication of the Georgia Barnette Conference Center at Tall Timbers in Woodworth Sept. 27. It took 14 months to construct the 8,400-square-foot facility.

GBCC from page one

signed for flexibility, providing a 560-seat auditorium layout or the option to change the floor plan into six meeting rooms with a 280-seat general assembly space.

The center is named after Georgia Barnette, the first elected and paid Woman's Missionary Union executive director/treasurer in Louisiana. Every year Louisiana Baptists collect the Georgia

Barnette State Missions Offering in her honor.

The conference rooms were named for M.E. Dodd, Joseph Willis, J.D. Grey, Carl Conrad, E. O. Ware and the Woman's Missionary Union.

The facility hosted its first meeting following the ceremony, when members of the Louisiana Baptist Convention Executive Board met in the auditorium.

Caskey from page 11

churches average 250 or less in worship.

"The Caskey Center was asked to partner with the SBC Pastors' Conference because we are one of the only entities in the SBC completely devoted to smaller-membership and bivocational ministry," said Mark Tolbert, director of the Caskey

Center. "The Caskey Center serves as a champion for our smaller churches throughout the convention. We look forward to sharing research, highlighting best practices and celebrating the significant work of our smaller churches."

Tolbert considers the partnership a "win-win" arrangement. The Pastors' Conference team receives financial and logistical help needed to put on a large-scale event. The Caskey Center gains the opportunity to promote intentional gospel-centered conversations to a larger gathering of Southern Baptists.

"We are eager to emphasize and stimulate gospel-centered conversations among all of our pastors and churches," Tolbert said.

"With a 16-year decline in baptisms, the SBC is in crisis and we hope to encourage and advance intentionality and accountability and to help 'move the needle' in reaching our neighborhoods and the nations with the Gospel."

While the significance of smaller churches will be on display, Tolbert stressed that the 2017 SBC Pastors' Conference is not meant to be a gathering of small church pastors only. Tolbert and Miller both are seeking widespread participation from those who pastor the smallest to the largest churches.

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LOUISIANA BAPTISTS

Board from page 9

Not long after historic flooding affected 155,000 homes in Louisiana, Southern Baptist Disaster Relief teams arrived on scene to give a cup of cold water in Jesus' name.

Through late September, 170 teams from 29 state conventions have responded. They have completed more than 6,000 jobs, prepared 676,019 meals, given out 6,961 gallons of Shockwave mold killer, washed 6,133 loads of laundry and distributed 2,336 Bibles.

Of those they ministered to on the field, 198 have accepted Christ as their personal Lord and Savior.

"All of what we do is not because we like to work," said Gibbie McMillan, Louisiana Baptists state disaster relief director. "But it's to open the door to the Gospel."

McMillan voiced appreciation for the volunteers and others who have given more than \$632,000 to flood relief efforts.

"Thank you for your help," he said. "Thank you for giving. I've never been more proud of being a part of an organization as I am the Louisiana Baptist Convention, Southern Baptist Convention and especially the missions and ministries team of the LBC."

ENTITIES REPORT

Leading the reports from the four entities, Will Hall, director of the LBC Office of Public Policy and editor of *The Baptist Message*, told board members about growth in paid subscriptions for the print edition of the state newspaper, showed them the revamped design and functions of the website, and highlighted the news services' 2016 coverage.

Hall said the *Message* continued to "focus on the cooperative ministries" of Louisiana Baptists, with special "emphasis on evangelism and soul-winning."

"We also had occasion to cover a number of emerging issues, events and developments," he said, with particular attention to the March and August floods and "Louisiana Baptists' extraordinary response."

"Our goal is to share this news in the context of God's prevailing grace and glory – especially His ability to take what might appear as evil and use it for good," Hall shared, "even for the transformation of someone's heart."

Hall said his team covered a number of other issues im-

portant to Louisiana Baptists, including the SBC presidential contest, changes at the International Mission Board and controversy among national leaders relating to the U.S. presidential race.

"But perhaps the overall focus of our ministry for 2016 is best represented by the headline of a special package of stories we published in the August 11 edition," he said. "3,202 Saved in Brazil!"

Hall also shared a number of successes by the Office of Public Policy with the state legislature, including engaging Louisiana Baptists' to influence the election of a conservative Speaker of the House.

He also praised Rep. Mike Johnson, Rep. Frank Hoffman and Sen. Ryan Gatti, all members of Louisiana Baptist churches, for championing legislation to protect unborn children from dismemberment; prevent state funds from going to abortion clinics for any purpose; and, prohibit profiteering from the harvesting of body parts from the unborn, respectively.

Hall said HB1019, authored by Rep. Rick Edmonds, a retired Louisiana Baptist pastor, was particularly special to him.

Known as "Jacob's Law," after Hall's youngest son who has Down's syndrome and testified on the measure before the House and Senate Health and Welfare Committees, this legislation protects unborn children from being targeted for abortion because of the pre-natal diagnosis of a disability.

Louisiana Baptist Children's Home Executive Director Perry Hancock said this year the ministry has served more than 4,400 children and families, including more than 200 children and mothers in residential ministries, 1,500 individuals through its Granberry Counseling Centers and 1,200 women served through the mobile pregnancy care clinic.

He also said that this year, at least 180 of those they served accepted Christ as their personal Savior and Lord.

"All of these numbers represent precious people God loves. Thank you Louisiana Baptists for helping us touch each life," Hancock said.

Louisiana Baptist Foundation Executive Director Wayne Taylor reminded board members in his report they can use a variety of "tax wise" methods of giving that benefit a ministry of their choice. Taylor encouraged them to enter the



Will Hall, Office of Public Policy Director for the Louisiana Baptist Convention, testifies for Rick Edmond's HB 1019, known as Jacob's Law, concerning abortion in the House Health and Welfare committee while his son Jacob, who has Down's syndrome, looks on. The law, which passed, would protect unborn children, such as Jacob, from being targeted for abortion because of the diagnosis of a condition.

monthly Give-A-Gift drawing, which gives away \$1,000 to the Louisiana Baptist church or ministry of the winner's choice. More information can be found at http://www.lbfinfo.org/give_a_gift/.

While on the foundation website, users can also give toward ongoing flood disaster relief efforts.

He said the foundation has managed more than \$165 million of Louisiana Baptist funds since its inception.

"We want you to think about the foundation anytime an opportunity to give comes up," he said. "We're here to assist you."

"When people see God at work, they want to support that," he continued. "When they do, they can support it in big ways particularly through estate planning."

In his report, Louisiana College President Rick Brewer said the college saw a 14.5 percent increase of new incoming students this year, with 255 new freshmen and 61 transfer students enrolling for the fall semester. He said LC must enroll at least 400 new students next year to be on solid financial footing and is optimistic they can reach that number in the fall of 2017.

He encouraged board members to send their students to LC's preview day on Oct. 8 and attend a Values and Ethics Conference Oct. 10-11.

PRESIDENT REMARKS

Spinney closed the meeting with a challenge to get ready for the harvest.

Citing John 4:27-38, Spinney cautioned pastors not to focus so much on the size of the church budget or how many

people they have baptized, but rather to keep their sights set on the Gospel.

"We need to meet people's needs with good works," he said. "But the main purpose is to give the good news. That's what Christ has commissioned

us to do. That's what you and I are to do in this world."

He said God has placed believers in this world for one purpose – to share Christ.

"Lift up your eyes because the fields are white, they are ready for the harvest," he said.

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Generosity builds state-of-the-art place to learn, teach and worship

BY HOLLY JO LINZAY
Regional Reporter

WOODWORTH —In the truest biblical sense, Cecil Gassiott, a general contractor in Alexandria, is a blessed man because he believes in “giving back,” and his actions show his giving spirit is real.

Gassiott’s generous donation of equipment use and manpower saved multiple thousands of dollars in the

construction of the Georgia Barnette Conference Center on the grounds of Tall Timbers in Forest Hill.

Robert Woods, missions’ builder strategist for Louisiana Baptists, said Gassiott’s gracious giving and willingness to serve has made a significant impact.

“Cecil Gassiott has probably saved us more than \$150,000 on this project. He has been a godsend,” Woods said. “If we had to get our own volunteers, it would have taken us another three to four more months to complete this job.”

The construction of the 8,400-square-foot center is almost complete, and will be dedicated during the Sept. 27 ribbon-cutting ceremony at the Louisiana Baptist Convention Executive Board fall meeting at Tall Timbers.

Even this week Gassiott

has had his crew on site finishing up the concrete work, sidewalks and curbing in the asphalt parking lot.

“Over the last month, Cecil has had anywhere from five to six men working 10 to 12 hour days. It’s amazing how he is paying his workers a full salary and not charging us a thing. He has supplied the labor and equipment,” said Woods.

John Hebert, Louisiana Baptists missions and ministry director, could not agree more. “It would be impossible to put an exact dollar amount on how much Cecil has contributed to this project. He has definitely gone above and beyond what he said he would do and we are truly thankful.”

A resident of Woodworth and a member of Calvary Baptist Church in Woodworth, Gassiott, the owner of Cecil Gassiott Construction LLC,



Brian Blackwell photo

Cecil Gassiott, the owner of a construction company in Alexandria, accepts a plaque of appreciation from John Hebert, missions and ministry director for Louisiana Baptists. Gassiott, a member of Calvary Baptist Church in Woodworth, is among many who have given financial resources and volunteered to help make the Georgia Barnette Conference Center possible.

saw an opportunity to work with his close friend Hebert, a classmate at Rapides High School in Lecompte, and

another good friend in Sam White, the director at Tall

See **GENEROSITY** on 15

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White from page one

tions and prayed for her roommate until one day in August when White made the decision she needed Jesus and publicly announced her profession of faith to the congregation at Cook Baptist.

The news stirred joy inside Campbell, who shared a house with White for eight years before discovering White was not a Christian.

White’s conversion brought back memories of another person Campbell knew who reaffirmed his relationship with Christ.

Campbell had been married to her husband, Henry, for 34 years when she learned he did not know Jesus. A deacon at the time, he admitted to her he did not have a saving knowledge of Christ.

So in 1980, at age 64, Henry White professed Jesus as his Lord and Savior. From that point until his death in 2010 Campbell exhibited the change in his life because of his faith in Christ.

“I was surprised he wasn’t a Christian because he had been serving in the church so long,” Campbell said. “We as Christians need to realize that some of our people are active in service but don’t know Jesus.

“So I began praying for

him and he one day accepted Christ,” she continued. “With my husband and Ophelia, it was a reminder that it’s never too late to become a Christian and that you should never give up on a person. It takes time, a lot of time.”

White’s baptism came as an encouragement for the Cook Baptist congregation in a number of ways.

Her story is a reminder it is never too late to accept Jesus. It also is evidence how the witness of a close friend can be a catalyst for a lost person to become a Christian, said Discipleship and Administration Pastor Todd Free.

“It’s inspiring to people, particularly for senior adults, to know that God is still touching hearts even in the elderly years,” Free said. “There are many others like Mrs. White who went their whole life thinking they knew Christ but understood later their need for Him.

“I’m praying we have others in our congregation who have a similar story will have the courage to do as Mrs. White,” he continued. “We see her testimony as a gift from God to our church and are grateful he allowed us to be a part of this.”

Generosity from page 14

Timbers, but he also recognized God was opening a door to serve and minister.

“God has blessed me all my life and I did not want to miss an opportunity to help, especially since it is in my area of expertise. I’m blessed to be able to help,” Gassiott said.

Construction for the Georgia Barnette Conference Center began during July 2015.

According to Woods, Gassiott became involved a month later when he brought a large crane from Baton Rouge and provided the manpower to lay the trusses for the Center. The crane and the work saved the LBC a sum of more than \$75,000. Later, Gassiott and his crew returned to put in drainage and water lines.

“He saved us another \$25,000 in supplying the equipment and labor for the work on the drainage and water lines. Cecil said if we needed anything else just let

him know,” he added.

Recently, Woods and Herbert were building forms to pour the front sidewalk, and Gassiott happened by.

Seeing the two men hard at work, he volunteered himself and his crew to complete the project, including the retaining wall around the prayer garden.

He brought in backhoes and boring equipment, and within a week he and his team had finished up the forms and poured the concrete.

Bill Temple, the GBBC’s on-site project coordinator, said Gassiott has been a volunteer of the highest caliber.

“He’s made quite an impact, and we appreciate every minute of time he has given,” Temple said, adding that about 300 volunteers from some 30 different churches have been hard at work for the last year and half building the new center.

Volunteers were still feverishly working on the final touches inside the conference

center as they lay ceramic tiles and carpet, finish base boards and install countertops. The granite work in the bathrooms will be finished, and a security system was installed in time for the dedication ceremony Sept. 27.

“We were still tweaking things the day before the ceremony, but it is 98 percent completed, and nothing will interfere with the dedication ceremony,” Woods said.

Joyce Temple, wife of Bill, has been on site since the first day the volunteers arrived. She said during the entire time God has provided what was needed exactly when it was needed.

“The Lord knew,” she said. “It’s a calling, and when we are called, we give it our best. The ones who volunteered gave it all they could.

“Some volunteers came every day. Some have been here three to five days at a time,” Temple said, adding that besides going home occasionally on a weekend, she and Bill have been living in their RV at Tall Timbers for the last 17 months working on the center.

“We never anticipated being here this long, when we first started this project,” she added. “But we are God’s workmanship, created in His image for good works which God prepared beforehand. God knew before the project was even started what it would take. It has been a wonderful experience.”

The center is a state-of-the-art missions training facility will curate and display historical information about the leadership of early-day Louisiana Baptists.

The building has a beam-structure foyer, is fully-equipped with technology, and has a versatile conference design for hosting events. The worship center will seat 560 in its open configuration, or can be converted to host 280 in the main hall with 6 conference rooms available.

Outside, a prayer garden with a reflecting pool overlook the lake.

Janie Wise, women’s missions and ministry strategist, said the conference center will serve as a place for missions’ education and missionary training, and also will be a

place for children, youth, Royal Ambassadors, girls’ mission groups and others to gather to worship during their camps.

The building of the center, Wise said, continues a legacy of Louisiana Baptist focus on mission training.

The property for Tall Timbers was purchased by WMU in 1954 for \$16,000. In 1975, a chapel, named to honor Kathryn Carpenter, the Louisiana WMU executive secretary/director from 1955-1986, was constructed.

In 1981, the Louisiana Baptist WMU became a department of the LBC missions division and ownership of Tall Timbers was transferred to the LBC.

The Louisiana Department of Highways used eminent domain law in 2003 to take a significant part of the campgrounds, including Carpenter Chapel and the manager’s residence.

With the completion of the Georgia Barnette Conference Center, Wise said, a ‘void’ will be filled and once again there will be a “place to learn, teach and worship.”

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