



# THE BAPTIST MESSAGE

June 20, 2019

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## Dew unanimous choice as NOBTS president



Brian Blackwell photo

Jamie Dew takes questions during a press conference following his election as the ninth president of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

By Staff

Louisiana Baptist Message

NEW ORLEANS (LBM) – Trustees of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary voted unanimously, June 5, to elect Jamie Dew as the ninth president of the school during a specially called meeting on campus.

An 11-person search committee recommended Dew, and that trustee panel included several Louisiana Baptists: Waylon Bailey, pastor, First Baptist Church, Covington; John Foster, member, Franklin Avenue Baptist Church, New Orleans; and, Jackie Myers, member, First Baptist Church, Sicily

Island. Jack Bell, pastor of the First Baptist Church in Hornbeck also served on the committee but stepped aside for personal reasons in the spring, according to the seminary public relations department.

Dew is succeeding Chuck Kelley, who retires July 31.

During an introductory press conference, Dew said New Orleans offers a unique opportunity for theological education and ministerial preparation.

“In this city you have the best of everything - culture, challenge, opportunity for ministry, a religiously plural context that

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## Larto Baptist is a refuge in time of need

By Brian Blackwell  
Message Staff Writer

LARTO (LBM) -- Larto Baptist Church has opened its front lawn as a sanctuary for residents wanting to protect their vehicles and personal belongings from rising floodwaters in the community.

Since early May, water levels have risen four feet in the community located 24 miles south of Jonesville.

Nearly 40 cars are parked on the church lawn which rises seven feet higher than the surrounding area, Pastor Kenny Smith told the *Baptist Message*.

“Our church yard looks like a used car lot,” Smith said. “We are showing our

See LARTO, page 9



Submitted photo

Nicole James (left) and Emilie Robertson, daughter of Greenwell Springs Baptist Church Pastor Brian Robertson, formed a special bond. Robertson discovered her friend was an agnostic, so she began to pray for opportunities to share Jesus with her. On Jan. 29 at a restaurant, she led James to a relationship with Christ.

## Celebrity bodyguard joins body of Christ

By Brian Blackwell  
Message Staff Writer

CENTRAL – Hadley James had served as a bodyguard for high-profile celebrities around the U.S., and was awash with all the perks that came with the job; but, he found true satisfaction and returned to his walk with Christ after watching live worship services broadcast by Greenwell Springs Baptist Church.

A few months later James experienced another spiritual watershed moment when he was baptized alongside his daughter, Nicole, in front of the Greenwell Springs congregation.

“It was one of the most exciting experiences in my life,” James told the *Baptist Message*. “My daughter was lost and is now alive in Christ.”

### SEEDS, SON & HARVEST

A number of divine appointments led up to the Feb. 10, 2019, celebration for the James family, with the first Gospel seeds planted in early 2016.

James had retired from the bodyguard profession in 1995, ending his behind-the-scenes

See BODYGUARD, page 9

## David Cranford to be LBC president nominee

By Will Hall  
Message Editor

ALEXANDRIA (LBM) – David Cranford, pastor of the First Baptist Church in Ponchatoula, will be

nominated for president of the Louisiana Baptist Convention during the 2019 annual meeting.

Philip Robertson, pastor of the Philadelphia Baptist Church with campuses in

Deville and Alexandria, alerted the *Baptist Message* June 3 of his intentions to “enthusiastically” make the nomination because Cranford “knows

See CRANFORD, page 2

# Cranford from page one

and loves Louisiana, and he has a heart to see our state reached for Christ.”

The LBC annual meeting is scheduled to be held in the Alexandria Riverfront Center, Nov. 11-12.



David Cranford

### STATEMENT OF SUPPORT

Robertson said he has

known Cranford for 23 years and served alongside him for 13 years when they were members of the same association.

“He has demonstrated his heart to see Louisiana won for Christ by serving on nearly every level of associational and state convention leadership for more than 20 years, as well as several positions in the Southern Baptist Convention,” Robertson said. “His belief that anyone, anywhere, anytime can be saved fuels his passion for evangelism and missions at home and around

the world.”

“Dr. Cranford believes churches working cooperatively together is the best method of carrying out the Great Commission,” he continued. “This conviction is demonstrated by his church giving 10 percent through the Cooperative program and 2 percent to the Northshore Baptist Association.”

### BY THE NUMBERS

The database of the Annual Church Profile confirms that the First Baptist Church in Ponchatoula has consistently supported cooperative missions and ministries at 10 percent of un-

designated receipts through the Cooperative Program for at least a decade and during the same timeframe contributed 2 percent to the Northshore Baptist Association.

During the last full reporting year, 2018, those gifts amounted to \$101,525 through CP and \$20,305 to the NBA from undesignated receipts amounting to \$1,015,251.

The congregation also supported the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering, \$12,380, the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering, \$7,526, and the Georgia Barnette State Missions Offering, \$5,541.

Additionally, First Ponchatoula averaged 434 in Sunday worship service and baptized 25 new believers. Moreover, the congregation has witnessed 314 baptisms since 2008.

Since 2007, Cranford also has coordinated Louisiana Baptists’ REACH Missions Partnerships with South Korea, recording 6,700 professions of faith during his leadership of these annual mission trips and camps.

### CANDIDATE’S RESPONSE

“I was born in Louisiana, educated in Louisiana, married a Louisianan, begat Louisiana children, and served my entire full-time ministry at Tioga First Baptist and

First Baptist, Ponchatoula, two great Louisiana Baptist churches,” Cranford told the Baptist Message.

“I’m excited about the possibility of working with our new executive director, Dr. Steve Horn, to strengthen our churches in igniting a passion for Jesus in every people group in the next generation in Louisiana,” he added. “There is no greater need! The harvest is huge!”

### PERSONAL DATA

Cranford earned three degrees from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary: Doctor of Ministry, Master of Divinity and Master of Theology (all in biblical studies). He completed his bachelor’s degree at the University of New Orleans in communications with a minor in psychology.

He has served in a number of capacities with Louisiana Baptists and Southern Baptists, including: trustee, Louisiana Baptist Message (2017-present); NBA Executive Board member (2008-present) and chairman of the search team for the director of missions (2018); North Rapides Baptist Association Executive Board member (1997-2008) and moderator (2003-2005), vice moderator

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**Dew** from page one

our students could learn in," he said. "In short, if you can learn to share the Gospel here, if you could learn to minister to the poor, to the broken, to the needy here, it seems to me that would be incredible preparation for whatever it is God is going to take you.

"I think part of it is just the city that we find ourselves in," he continued. "I think New Orleans also has a tremendous footprint in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Florida and through the Southeast of people that have come here, been trained and prepared, and now have gone out into this region and are sharing the Gospel, and representing Christ and His cause. When I look at those types of things, the footprint that we have and the number of graduates that we have, the alumni that we have and the cultural preparation that we get here, I think that this puts together a very neat package."

**'INCREDIBLE DAY FOR NOBTS'**

Trustee chairman Tony Lambert called Dew's election "an incredible day for New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, we believe, not only for our seminary but all our seminaries as we will continue to get stronger and do what God has called us to do. It is a historic day for our denomination, an exciting time, and we just think the timing is perfect."

Presidential search committee chairman Frank Cox shared about the process of finding a new chief executive, which began in October 2018 after Kelley announced his intentions to retire.

The committee reviewed 20 candidates that included three African Americans and a Hispanic, Cox said. After narrowing down the list to four finalists, God led them to choose Dew.

"Our campus at this time needs Jamie Dew," Cox said. "When we prayed and kept praying, we kept thinking every follow up interview with Jamie is going to begin to

reveal the kind of kink in his armor. And every time we met, no matter how hard we looked, we all walked away being more convinced that God was in this."

Dew most recently served as vice president for undergraduate studies and distance learning at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, North Carolina. In his role, Dew supervised all aspects of distance learning, the prison programs, and the writing center. He also taught classes and mentored undergraduate, master's, and doctoral students in his role as associate professor of philosophy and the history of ideas.

Dew holds degrees from Toccoa Falls College in Toccoa, Georgia, SEBTS, and the University of Birmingham in the United Kingdom. He and his wife, Tara, are the parents of two sets of twins.

He said that he is excited to become more familiar with Louisiana Baptists.

"We will go after recruiting in Mississippi, Alabama, Arkansas, Texas, all of them, but specifically the state of Louisiana," he said. "I have a deep sense that if we win the state of Louisiana, we grow this school. And so I want to

serve specifically that portion of our constituency. I can't wait to meet them, and serve alongside them and get to hear their needs, their passions and their concerns. Because part of what we will have to do here is not just reshape and restructure some things here on this campus. We always have to have an ear very closely connected to our constituency, to the churches of our convention, because our job is to serve them and to equip them. And so we will need to be in very close dialogue to hear what the needs are. So I look forward to doing that."

**FIRST-YEAR VISION**

Dew shared with trustees, staff and other guests his vision for his first year in office. He offered an increased emphasis on relationships within the Southern Baptist Convention, enrollment, Leavell College that offers undergraduate degrees and non-credit certificates and marketing of the institution.



NOBTS photo

Trustees pray for Jamie Dew and his family on June 5 after announcing his election as New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary's president.

"When I look at this campus and I look at this institution, I see potential dripping from it," Dew said. "And I can't wait to set my hand to that work and to be a plow and be a catalyst here."

Just as New Orleans is a diverse city, Dew said that the campus itself follows suit.

"I think theologically there is diversity here on this campus that is very much needed in Southern Baptist life," he said. "I don't mean that to take shots at any particular

group or anything. I think that we need the distinctions. I think that we need the diversity of thought that is represented by Southern Baptists. I think we need to find a better way of interacting with each other and loving each other and standing under the Baptist Faith and Message of 2000. But I think that the diversity, theologically speaking, even on this campus, provides us an opportunity to do that well and I look forward trying to do that."

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# Message's Timothy inducted into Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame

By Will Hall  
Message Editor

ALEXANDRIA (LBM) – Philip Timothy, managing editor of the Louisiana Baptist Message, was inducted in a class of 11 legendary sports figures into the Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame on June 8.

A record crowd of 822 attended the Saturday night ceremony, the sixth annual held in the Natchitoches Events Center. It was also the Hall of Fame's 60th anniversary.

Lauded for his elite sports writing and editing, Timothy was specially praised for his leadership as president of the Louisiana Sports Writers Association (1998-2000) and his part in initiating the effort

to establish a permanent home for the Hall of Fame.

"During and after his term as LSWA president, Philip was rock-solid in crucial times when we were building the support for funding the museum," said Doug Ireland, chairman of the Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame. "Not only did he provide sage advice, he had relationships around the state from top down that provided us with valuable insight and influence.

Ireland added that Timothy provided essential wisdom and direction at "pivotal" junctures.

"Philip stayed the course and calmed the waters," he said.

The 27,500-square-foot complex was built for \$23



Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame photo

Baptist Message managing editor Philip Timothy was among 11 legendary sports figures inducted into the Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame on June 8. They were (L-R) Roger Cadour, Philip Timothy, Danielle Scott, Marie Gagnard, Les Miles, Matt Dunigan, Peyton Manning, T. B. "T. Berry" Porter, Dave Nitz, Max Fugler, and Charles Smith. Timothy was honored with the Distinguished Service Award in Sports Journalism, the most prestigious honor offered to sports media in the state.

million, and opened June 28, 2013, in Natchitoches.

During the ceremony, Timothy, winner of more than 80 national, regional and state awards during four decades, was honored with the Distinguished Service Award in Sports Journalism, the most prestigious honor offered to sports media in the state.

He was joined in the 2019 class by: former LSU head coach Les Miles, whose 2007 football team won the NCAA BCS championship; two-time Super Bowl winning, and five-time Associated Press NFL MVP quarterback, and New Orleans native,

Peyton Manning; former Southern baseball coach Roger Cadour who compiled a record of 913-597-1 in 33 seasons; former Louisiana Tech quarterback Matt Dunigan, who passed for 7,042 yards in college before enjoying a stellar 14-year career in the CFL (1983-96); former LSU football player Max Fugler, an All-American center and defensive lineman for LSU's 1958 national championship team; Rodeo Hall of Fame member T.B. "T. Berry" Porter, who began his career as a rodeo cowboy at 16 years old in the 1940s and won nearly every prestigious title in his sport; Baton Rouge native Danielle Scott, a silver medalist in Olympic volleyball (2008, Beijing; 2012, London); Peabody High boys basketball coach Charles Smith (1,039-181 at Peabody while winning seven state titles in 34 seasons); Marie Gagnard, the first Louisiana native to become a professional tennis umpire; and, longtime Louisiana Tech play-by-play announcer Dave Nitz (44 seasons covering football, men's basketball and baseball), credited with 4,000 college broadcasts and another 3,000 broadcasts with minor league baseball.

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# Southern Baptists identify sexual abuse, racism as disqualifying for membership

By Staff

Louisiana Baptist Message

BIRMINGHAM, Alabama – Messengers took a stand against sexual abuse and racism at the Southern Baptist Convention Annual Meeting, June 11-12, in Birmingham, Alabama.

They voted, overwhelmingly, for amendments to the SBC Constitution to specifically state that sexual abuse and discrimination based on ethnicity are grounds for a church to be deemed as “not in friendly cooperation” with the Convention.

Messengers likewise voted to amend the SBC Bylaws to repurpose the Credentials Committee into a standing committee to make inquiries and recommendations for action regarding instances of sexual abuse, racism or other issues that call a church’s relationship with the SBC into question.

Ronnie Floyd, president and CEO of the SBC Executive Committee, told messengers the votes constituted a significant moment in the history of the Convention.

“May this world know that the Southern Baptist Convention stands against all forms of sexual abuse,” Floyd said. “May this world know that this

convention of churches – 47,000 churches, plus a few thousand congregations, just under 52,000 churches and congregations – has given a clear signal not only about what we believe about sexual abuse, but we also stand against all ethnic discrimination in the United States and around the world.”

The bylaw changes take effect immediately. However, the constitutional amendments will require a second two-thirds messenger vote at the 2020 SBC Annual Meeting, which will be held in Orlando, Florida.

J.D. Greear, pastor of The Summit Church in Durham, North Carolina, was reelected by acclamation to a second term as SBC president, and was joined by a diverse slate of other officers.

Marshal Ausberry, an African American and senior pastor of Antioch Baptist Church in Fairfax, Va., was elected without opposition as first vice president. Likewise, Noe Garcia, a Hispanic and senior pastor of North Phoenix Baptist Church, was elected second vice president with no rival candidate.

John Yeats, executive director of Missouri Baptist Convention and the

former director of communications and public policy for the Louisiana Baptist Convention, and Kathy Litton, director of planter spouse development for North American Mission Board, both faced competition, but won their respective elections.

Yeats defeated North Carolina pastor Eddie Eaton, garnering 2,527 votes – or 62.89 percent – to Eaton’s 1,465 votes – or 36.46 percent of 3,992 tallied ballots.

Litton, the first woman to serve as SBC registration secretary, edged out the incumbent Don Currence by 44 votes. Litton received 1,803 votes, or 50.49 percent of the votes cast, compared to Currence’s 1,759 votes, or 49.26 percent.

In the last act of this tenure in office, Don Currence said the unofficial registration was 8,183, compared to 9,637 messengers who registered last year.

Louisiana Baptists composed 389 of the crowd in Birmingham, down from the 718 who were present in Dallas.

**For more about the 2019 SBC Annual Meeting, including a list of motions and resolutions approved by messengers, visit [baptistmessage.com](http://baptistmessage.com).**



Janet Hoffman, national WMU president emerita, and member of Weldon Baptist Church in Bernice; Wanda Lee, national WMU executive director emerita and national WMU president emerita; Grace Cain, national Acteens panelist and member of the First Baptist Church in Pineville; Emily Morrow, a national Acteens panelist; and Debby Akerman, national WMU president emerita, prayed during the SBC Annual Meeting.



Grace Cain, a national Acteens panelist; Stewart Holloway, pastor of the First Baptist Church in Pineville, and his wife, Rebecca; and Sandra Wisdom-Martin, executive director-treasurer of the Woman’s Missionary Union, visit at the WMU Celebration and Annual Meeting.



Phyllis Rodgers, a member of Springhill Baptist Church in Ringgold, and Carolyn Fountain, a member of Franklin Avenue Baptist Church in New Orleans, visited at the WMU Annual Meeting.



Janie Wise, women’s missions and ministry strategist for Louisiana Baptists; Velma Gulledge, a member of Broadmoor Baptist Church in Shreveport; Pat Shelton, a member of Summer Grove Baptist Church in Shreveport; Kathy Jenkins, a member of Baptist Bible Fellowship in Shreveport; and Candace Russell, a member of Greater New Antioch Baptist Church in Monroe, enjoyed a time of fellowship at the Woman’s Missionary Union Missions Celebration and Annual Meeting.



Tonya Hancock, director of the Christian Women’s Job Corp at the Louisiana Baptist Children’s Home, (left) spoke with Ashley Gray of Mississippi at the Women’s Ministry Union booth in the exhibit hall of the 2019 Southern Baptist Convention Annual Meeting in Birmingham, Alabama. CWJC participants from the Children’s Home and Family Ministries had their handmade products on display during the national Woman’s Missionary Union meeting and also for purchase inside the exhibit hall. She is the wife of Perry Hancock, president and CEO of the Children’s Home.



Fred Luter, pastor of Franklin Avenue Baptist Church in New Orleans, offered encouragement at the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary gathering.

# Kelley says farewell, passes baton

By Staff

Louisiana Baptist Message

BIRMINGHAM, Alabama – Chuck Kelley, in his final New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary report to messengers, thanked Southern Baptists for their investment in the institution he served during his 23-year tenure as president.

He also voiced gratitude for Southern Baptists' support through the Cooperative Program, the primary funding channel for SBC cooperative missions and ministries, noting that \$172,751,343 has been given to the seminary via this funding mainstay during his time there.

"We want to thank you for that and say, 'Please keep on sacrificing, keep on sending, keep on supporting the preparation of your next generation of ministers,'" Kelley said. "All of us want to see our students graduate without student debt and you can make that

possible."

Kelley said the seminary has seen a small increase in enrollment this year, and that \$2 million has been given to the seminary's student scholarship endowment since January.

He referenced two scholarship programs that have helped students further the Gospel: the Fred Luter Scholarship has provided, since 2011, more than \$1 million in scholarships to African-American students in Atlanta and New Orleans; and, the Caskey Center has awarded annual scholarships, since 2015, for 300 bi-vocational pastors and pastors of smaller congregations, memberships of 250 or less in Louisiana and 150 or less in Alabama and Mississippi.

Each student enrolled in the Caskey Center program is required to have at least one Gospel conversation per week. Since 2015, Caskey students have had 34,732 Gos-

pel conversations that have resulted in 4,059 decisions for Christ.

"So many times they tell us they thought they never would be able to go to seminary had it not been for this program," he said.

"Scholarship does make a difference," he said in making the case that scholarships make a difference in pastors getting an education.

After presenting his report, Kelley yielded the remainder of his time to Jamie Dew, who was elected president of NOBTS on June 5.

Dew told messengers that while he enjoyed his time as a teacher, mentor and dean at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, North Carolina, he has "fallen in love" with NOBTS and New Orleans in a short time.

"I had written a very cute, beautiful story for my life, but through this process I have remembered that God has the right to rewrite our



Van Payne photo

Chuck Kelley (center) and his wife, Rhonda, received a framed resolution, June 11, from Ronnie Floyd, president and CEO of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee, to honor Kelley's retirement as president of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

stories and that He writes more beautiful stories than we do," Dew said. "God took something from me that I deeply loved – my college at Southeastern – and He put in my hands and my heart New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary."

Dew said the seminary will prioritize preaching and the proclamation of the Gospel, and, will strive to

teach and embody a servant attitude.

"We must be a people who walk on our knees and keep our noses on the floor before God begging God to do a great work in us and a great work through us," Dew said. "So at the beginning of this journey, I offer our students, our faculty, our administration, and myself to you as your servants for the century before us."

# NOBTS team sows & reaps in Birmingham

By Brian Blackwell

Message Staff Writer

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (LBM) – New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary students recorded 19 professions of faith during a week-long evangelism "boot camp" and outreach blitz in Birmingham, Alabama, prior to Southern Baptists' annual business meeting.

The students participated in evangelism training, visited 1,100 homes and shared the Gospel with 255 people in neighborhoods throughout the city June 3-7, NOBTS officials reported.

They also joined 400 Southern Baptist teams, June 8, and collectively shared the Gospel with 10,409 homes during Crossover, Southern Baptists'

evangelistic outreach in the host city for the annual meeting. Combined, the teams engaged in 1,817 Gospel conversations and

364 of these individuals they encountered declared Christ as Lord, Crossover organizers reported. Another 2,251 persons sought prayer.

Teams also provided free medical and dental care through a Send Relief mobile clinic set up at Birmingham's Sixth Avenue Baptist Church.

## GOSPEL ENGAGEMENT

The first recorded salvation took place on the students' first day in the city.

Tony Thibodeaux, pastor of Baratavia Baptist Church in Lafitte, and two other students led Hannah, 7, to faith in Christ during an



NOBTS students Brandon Foottit and Joshua Noojin shared the Gospel with a student, June 6.



New Orleans Baptist Theological students participated in evangelism training and shared the Gospel with 255 people the week before Crossover in Birmingham, Alabama. The students recorded 19 professions of faith.

in-home visit.

"For God to move the way he did was really special," Thibodeaux told the *Baptist Message*. "It really set the tone for the rest of the week."

Days later, Brandon Foottit, student pastor at the First Baptist Church in LaPlace, shared the Gospel with Demarkus, a student with the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

Foottit had wrapped up a morning of evangelism training classes and felt led

to sit with Dermarkus instead of eating with his fellow NOBTS students in the UAB cafeteria, where the New Orleans team dined throughout the week.

"He told me that he grew up in church but never trusted Christ," Foottit said. "I had been praying earlier that day that God would give me those opportunities. I'm thankful I was able to be a part of someone realizing they had a need to accept Jesus as Lord."

During Crossover, Foottit left encouraged by the spirit of the churches in Birmingham who will reap the benefit of the spiritual decisions that were made.

"I went with one member, Sammy, door to door sharing Jesus with people near his neighborhood," Foottit said. "By the end of the day he was in tears and said he grew so much in so little time of going out to see God at work through simple Gospel conversations."

# Legislature 2019: Key wins on moral issues, social concerns

By Will Hall  
Message Editor

BATON ROUGE (LBM) – Key protections for children, born and unborn, highlighted the 2019 Louisiana Legislative Session, but other moral issues and social concerns were in the spotlight, too, and most were decided favorably with regard to the consensus views of Louisiana Baptists regarding these matters.

## LIFE

In 2018, Louisiana Baptists overwhelmingly approved a resolution declaring their “unwavering commitment to rescue and protect life from the womb through eternity,” and pro-life legislation approved in 2019 included multiple bills championed by Louisiana Baptist lawmakers:

Rep. Katrina Jackson (D-Morehouse, Ouachita), and Sen. Beth Mizell (R-St. Tammany, Tangipahoa, Washington, Florida), a member of the First Baptist Church in Franklinton, championed a state amendment in their respective chambers. Approved by two-thirds votes in the House and Senate, the Love Life Amendment (H.B. 425) offers to add a simple statement to the Louisiana Constitution, declaring, “To protect human life, nothing in this constitution shall be construed to secure or protect a right to abortion or require the funding of abortion.” This measure protects against a rogue state judge ruling that an abortion right exists that is not explicitly stated, and invalidating the common sense pro-life laws that have been passed by the legislature. The original intent was to place the matter on the 2019 ballot (a simple majority is needed); however, Jackson accepted a change to have voters consider the issue in 2020.

Earlier this year, the Louisiana Baptist Convention Executive Board unanimously endorsed the Love Life Amendment and the Office of Public Policy announced plans to energize Louisiana Baptists’ support.

Three Louisiana Baptist lawmakers championed legislation that tightens restrictions on abortions:

-- Rep. Frank Hoffman

(R-Ouachita), a member of the First Baptist Church in West Monroe, authored H.B. 133, removing a loophole for chemical abortions, and, changing the definition of “abortion” in the law to use “unborn child” instead of “fetus,” specifically strengthening the language to acknowledge “abortion” causes “the death of the unborn child.”

-- Rep. Raymond Crews (R-Bossier), a member of the First Baptist Church in Bossier City, successfully passed H.B. 484 “to deter and punish the illegal destruction of patient medical records by abortion clinics.” Crews undertook the initiative after discovering that abortion clinics “have obstructed investigation of sexual assaults involving minors and allegations of illegally performed abortions” and “hindered the rights of victims to pursue or obtain justice” by losing or destroying documentation such as patient records.

-- Sen. Mizell moved legislation that requires “abortion facility professionals and abortion facility staff members to report crimes of human trafficking, trafficking of children for sexual purposes, rape, incest, or coerced abortion to law enforcement, whether the victim is a minor child or an adult” (S.B. 238). She also pushed through S.B. 221 that mandates women be provided information “in writing” that contains: the name of the abortionist as it “appears on the membership roll of the Louisiana State Board of Medical Examiners;” details about the abortionist’s medical qualifications, active admitting privileges, if any, as well as malpractice insurance; and, disciplinary actions against the abortionist taken “in the last 10 years.”

All four bills await the governor’s signature.

Meanwhile, Act 31, authored as Senate Bill 184 by Sen. John Milkovich (D-DeSoto), provides protection against abortion at the first heartbeat of an unborn child, and mandates an ultrasound prior to every abortion to ensure adherence to the law. The bill has a “trigger statement” to avoid costly litigation, and goes into effect if the U.S. 5th Circuit Court of Appeals decides favorably regarding a similar “heartbeat

## CULTURAL NEWS

bill” passed this year by the Mississippi legislature.

### FAMILY & CHILDREN

Two resolutions were overwhelmingly approved to establish task forces that will research and craft legislation related to key issues impacting Louisiana families. Both address concerns raised by Louisiana Baptists in resolutions passed by messengers in recent years.

Sen. Gerald Long, president pro tempore of the Senate and a member of the First Baptist Church in Natchitoches, took up the banner for protecting children against exposure to online adult content. SCR 56 directs the state attorney general to establish the Task Force on Protecting Children from Exposure to Pornography “to study all issues related to the exposure of children to

pornography and the impact it has on their lives” with the aim of proposing legislation that regulates the internet and web accessible devices.

Sen. Mizell proposed SCR 107 which establishes the “Task Force on Benefits of Marriage and Incentives for Premarital Counseling and Pre-Divorce Counseling” under the purview of the Senate Select Committee on Women and Children, on which she serves as vice chair. The aim is to create tax code and other incentives to entice couples to participate in premarital counseling and parents considering divorce to take part in courses which include reconciliation sessions. The Senate passed the legislation without opposition. In the House, 21 lawmakers argued against the proposal, with some lamenting that it would make it harder to divorce in Louisiana, but the measure was approved.

Additionally, Sen. Regina Barrow (D-East Baton Rouge) sponsored S.B. 109, which

awaits the governor’s expected signature. This bill extends foster care to cover an age gap in care that put young people at risk. Previously a child in a residential foster care home timed out in terms of eligibility at age 18. Barrow’s measure allows a child to remain in an extended foster care program until the age of 21.

The Louisiana Baptist Children’s Home and Family Services already provides extended foster care for 18-21 year olds.

Perry Hancock, LB-CHFM president and CEO, applauded the move by the state, saying that “extending care for those young adults will provide them with the support they need to successfully complete their high school education.”

“We have seen the positive results of having that support in our PathFinders transitional living ministry,” he affirmed.

See LEGISLATURE, page 10

LIVING  
**HIS**  
PURPOSE  
EXODUS 9:16

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# Gulf Coast Baptist feeds physical, spiritual hunger in Lafourche

By Brian Blackwell  
Message Staff Writer

**GOLDEN MEADOW** – Gulf Coast Baptist Church recently distributed one ton of pork while also planting Gospel seeds with the residents of Lafourche Parish.

Seven members and their children handed out boxes filled with frozen pork loin, a Bible and Gospel tract to more than 100 people at the Gulf Coast campus, May 10. The effort was the first scheduled activity for the church's newest ministry, "Feeding Lafourche."

Hannah Terrebbonne, a GCBC member, said the volunteers fol-

lowed Jesus' example in Matthew 14:15-21: "Now when it was

Second Harvest Food Bank of New Orleans, one in five households in Louisiana is at risk of hunger. The organization said rising costs of food, housing and utilities, coupled with high unemployment and low-wage jobs have increased the need for emergency food assistance.

Gulf Coast Baptist is one of more than 700 partners with the Food Bank, which encompasses a 23-parish area.

Terrebbonne said future plans for Feeding Lafourche include using funds provided by a grant from the Louisiana Baptist Convention to purchase another freezer

and shelving to increase its storage capacity.

"Christ commands us to share the Gospel with everyone, whether that's through pork loins or something else it doesn't matter as long as the message of Christ is the focus," she said.

Pastor Shane Terrebbonne, who is the father of Hannah, said the purpose of Feeding Lafourche is two-fold.

"It's worth it if only one person comes to Christ and it allows our church to create a positive buzz in our local community as a new church plant," he said. "We want to communicate that we're active in and care about our community."



Frozen pork loin was among the items included in a box recently distributed by Gulf Coast Baptist Church to the community.



Submitted photo

Members of Gulf Coast Baptist Association recently packed food boxes for residents of Lafourche Parish. The effort was part of a new ministry called "Feeding Lafourche."

evening, the disciples came to him and said, 'This is a desolate place, and the day is now over; send the crowds away to go into the villages and buy food for themselves.' But Jesus said, 'They need not go away; you give them something to eat.' They said to him, 'We have only five loaves here and two fish.' And he said, 'Bring them here to me.' Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass, and taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing. Then he broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds.' According to the

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# Bodyguard from page one

with the rich and famous, to take a position as director of security and loss prevention for a national construction company in Las Vegas, Nevada.

He also began breed-

ing Great Danes as a side venture.

Hadley had become a child of God as a sophomore in high school, but he had drifted away from the Lord in the ensuing years.



Submitted photo

The Larto Baptist Church front lawn became a refuge for many in the community. The congregation offered residents the freedom to park cars on the grass to keep them out of the floodwaters.

# Larto from page one

support for our neighbors, many who have water near their homes and with the only way to get out by boat. Anyone who needs help, we do it because Christ commands it of us.”

Smith said only four people attended worship services Sunday, May 19, because most of the residents were unable to travel to the campus. According to the Annual Church Profile database, Larto Baptist averages 35 worshipers for Sunday morning service.

All activities likely will

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Meanwhile, Smith asked Louisiana Baptists to pray for his congregation and community.

“Pray that people that are behind the backwater are able to get supplies,” Smith said, “and for their protection. When there is high water, you have snakes and alligators that like to roam around more than usual. Also, pray that we are able to continue ministering to our community and and show the love of Jesus.”

However, Christ began to draw Hadley back to Him after his wife, Tuesday, died from cancer in 2013.

Then God caused James’s path to cross with his future wife’s, Melissa, also a Great Dane breeder, at the 2016 Great Dane National Dog Show in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

She shared with him about her home church at Greenwell Springs and he became a regular online viewer of the congregation’s worship services.

A year later, the two became engaged during a dog show in Phoenix, Arizona, and were married in 2018. Afterward, James moved with his daughter to Baton Rouge and he restored his fellowship with the Lord at the Greenwell Springs Baptist Church.

“God used the live stream services to draw Hadley closer to Himself,” said GSBC Pastor Bryan Robertson. “Now he is on fire for Jesus here in Baton Rouge.”

But God was not done yet.

Robertson’s 11-year-old

daughter Emilie struck up a friendship with Nicole over a joint interest in basketball.

Then Emilie discovered Nicole was an agnostic, so she began to pray for opportunities to share Jesus with her friend. The friendship between the two girls continued to grow, and on Jan. 29, 2019, God answered Emilie’s prayers for her friend. At a restaurant in Baton Rouge, Emilie led Nicole to a relationship with Christ.

“It was exciting,” Emilie said. “I wanted her to be saved and know Jesus. It is important that we do what God tells us to do.”

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“My wife believed Emilie would be involved with Nicole’s salvation,” he said, adding that he and his wife, Anne, have been intentional to show her how to witness to friends.

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 Lunch provided.

**WHERE:** 192 Pinegrove Dr, Pineville LA 71360

**COST:** \$75/ includes lunch.

**To register, call 318.473.9999**  
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**Legislature** from page 7

**GAMBLING**

“Gaming” legislation (“gambling” is banned in the Louisiana Constitution) appeared to be on the fast track in the legislature. Forty-seven parishes approved the legalization of fantasy sports “contests” in 2018, but defeat of H.B. 600 (which levies taxes on fantasy sports) means neither fantasy sports (described as a “simulation sports game”) or live sports betting will be allowed in the state at least until 2021, unless a special session is called.

The House Appropriations Committee rejected Sen. Danny Martiny’s S.B. 153, which would have allowed sports wagering at riverboat, track or land-based casinos. Seeking to revive his bill, Martiny amended H.B. 600 to include

sports betting. However, both the House and Senate rejected those amendments, and Martiny subsequently engaged in a filibuster of H.B. 600 in the Senate until the legislative session ended.

**CULTURE**

Sen. Mizell offered a passionate argument “as a woman, as a mother, as a grandmother” from the Senate floor to explain why she was voting “no” to alter the U.S. Constitution with an “Equal Rights Amendment.” Citing cases in New Mexico and Connecticut, she expressed specific concern about “the connection with abortion in the ERA” and how the ERA in those states has been used to appropriate tax dollars “to fund abortions.”

Other opponents raised

concerns that the ERA would require women to be drafted if compulsory service was ever reinstated.

Sen. J.P. Morrell (D-Jefferson, Orleans, St. Bernard) argued SCR 2 was a bi-partisan issue that “pre-dates the entire abortion debate.” However, he also used language advocacy groups have employed to argue the ERA confers rights to those who claim a transgender or gender fluid sexual identity.

Ultimately, the resolution lost by a 9-26 vote.

The death penalty was highly debated by both chambers.

S.B. 112 offered to abolish the death penalty completely “after January 1, 2021” and H.B. 215 sought to eliminate capital punishment as a penalty “for first degree murder, first degree rape, and treason committed on or after Aug. 1, 2019.” Various religious and legal groups argued passionately

their positions. In the end, the former lost a Senate vote, 13-25, and the latter, which made it out of committee by only one vote, was not brought up for consideration in the House.

Finally, attempts to legalize recreational pot in the state went up in smoke.

H.B. 509, among multiple other actions, proposed to allow “individuals over the age of 21 to consume marijuana and to possess up to one ounce of marijuana.” A companion bill, H.B. 564, would have legalized “the cultivation, manufacturing, and retail sale of cannabis and cannabis products.”

Both were assigned to the House Committee on Administration of Criminal Justice chaired by Rep. Sherman Mack (R-Livingston), a member of the Bethlehem Baptist Church in Albany, and each lost on a vote of “four yeas and eight nays.”

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**ON THE MOVE**

- **Joshua Timothy** is the new pastor at Esler Baptist Church, Pineville.
- **Louis Charrier** is the new pastor at New Horizon Baptist Church (Church Point Baptist Mission) in Church Point.
- **Reggie Ogea** is the interim pastor of First Baptist Church, Lafayette.
- **Chad Jackson** is the new pastor at Liberty Baptist Church, Calhoun.
- **Bodie Spicer** is the interim pastor at Clark Springs Baptist Church, Eros.
- **June Etier** retired as secretary at Highland Baptist Church after serving over 51 years.
- **Beverly Shoemaker** is the new secretary at Highland Baptist Church.
- **Charlotte Rogers and Jean Gianaris** retired at Ridge Avenue Baptist Church, West Monroe. Rogers served for 18 years as secretary and Gianaris served for 45 years as financial secretary.
- **Bobby Blasingame** resigns as student minister at Mt. Vernon Baptist Church, West Monroe.
- **Gregg Gober**, Music/College/Singles, to New York City, NAMB church plant from Cypress Baptist Church, Benton.
- **James Snyder** is the new pastor at Elm Grove Baptist Church, Bossier City.
- **Buddy Hampton** is the new interim pastor at First Baptist Church, Greenwood.
- **Calep Lewis** resigns as Education/Senior Adults from Trinity Heights Baptist Church, Shreveport to Pastor, Bay View Baptist Church, Grand Bay, AL.
- **Ann Meyers** retires as music director at Westwood Baptist Church, Keithville.

## Cranford from page 2

(2001-2003); LBC Committee on Resolutions (2006-2007); LBC Committee on Order of Business (2002-2005); Southern Baptist Convention Tellers Committee (2004); NOBTS trustee (2006-2018) and chairman (2010-2013), vice chairman (2009-2010); and, LBC Executive Board member (2010-2016) and president (2014-2016).

In 2018 the LBC Office of Public Policy presented him with the inaugural Sham-mah's Courage Award for his leadership in defeating the state legislative initiative to move a riverboat casino to Tangipahoa Parish.

Cranford was raised in the First Baptist Church, Slidell, which licensed and

- HOMECOMING**
- Laurel Hill Baptist Church, LaCamp: **150th Homecoming**, June 22, 2 p.m. There will be a meal after the program. Former pastors have been invited to speak. Everyone is invited to attend. Pastor: Wesley Jackson.
  - First Baptist Church, Vidalia: **75th anniversary/homecoming**, June 23, 10:30 a.m. There will be a celebration meal where we will honor all of our former staff that can make it. Speaker: **Wes Faulk**. Pastor: Wes Faulk.
  - Philadelphia Baptist Church, Deville: **Homecoming**, June 23, 10 a.m. Speaker: **David E. Hankins**. Worship: **Fred Gilbert**. The church will provide chicken. Everyone bring a large covered dish or dessert. Pastor: Philip Robertson.
  - Southside Baptist Church, Denham Springs: **50th Anniversary Celebration**, June 30, 10:30 a.m. Speaker: **Bruce McKenzie**. Special Music: **Aaron Bond**. The church will be celebrating 50 years of ministry in our local community, state, nation, and around the world. We would like to invite all of our former members, staff and other friends to join with us. There will be a covered dish lunch afterward with jambalaya provided by the church. Pastor: Don Hoy.
  - First Baptist Church, Jackson: **184th Homecoming**, June 30, 11 a.m. Dinner on the grounds will follow the worship service. Everyone is invited to attend homecoming event. Pastor: Joe Nesom.

**REVIVAL**

- Aimwell Baptist Church, Zwolle: **Revival**, June 23-26, Sunday, 11 a.m. Starting Sunday night thru Wednesday a meal will be served at 5:30 p.m. with worship beginning around 6:30 p.m. Evangelist: **Sam Moore**. The church is located at 1892 Hwy-1215, Zwolle. Pastor: Ronnie Sandifer.
- Crestview Baptist Church, Farmerville: **Family Crusade**, June 23-26. Evangelist: **2TALK42 Ministries**. Pastor: Wayne Whiteside.
- Mound Baptist Church, Tallulah: **Revival**, June 23-26, Sunday, 10:30 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.; Monday-Wednesday, 6:30 p.m. Evangelist: **James Messer**. Special Music: **Jack Harper**. Pastor: Jim McCool.

ordained him to the Gospel ministry.

He and his wife Kathie have three children: Caroline, John and Peter, who will be, respectively, 16, 14 and 12 in 2019.

**FINAL THOUGHTS**

Robertson said he is excited about the future for the LBC and that includes his hope that Cranford will be elected:

"As Louisiana Baptists move into the next chapter of ministry under the leadership of our new LBC executive director, Steve Horn, I believe Dr. Cranford is the right man to serve beside him as our next LBC president."

**LAGNIAPPE**

- Cooper Baptist Church, Leesville is seeking a bi-vocational youth minister. Please send résumés by email cooperbaptistchurch@yahoo.com if you feel led to apply.
- Louisiana College, Pineville: **Louisiana Baptist All State Youth Choir home concert**, June 21, 6:30 p.m.
- First Baptist Church, Jonesville: **Trevor Thomas Ministries drama & music**, June 23, 6 p.m. A love offering will be taken. Pastor: Todd Whittington.
- Cross Roads Baptist Church, Grayson: **Trevor Thomas Drama Ministries**, June 23, 11 a.m. Pastor: Shane Duke.
- First Baptist Church, Jonesville: **Trevor Thomas Drama Ministries**, June 23, 6 p.m. Pastor: Todd Whittington.
- Wilda Baptist Church, Boyce: **Tribute Quartet in concert**, June 23, 6 p.m. Pastor: Joey Rudisill.
- First Baptist Church, Basile: **VBS – In the Wild**, June 23-27, 5:30-8 p.m. Register at www.fbcbasile.com/VBS2019. Pastor: Mike Fontenot.
- Bethel Baptist Church, Bastrop: **VBS – In the Wild**, June 24–28, 9:00 – 11:30 a.m. Pastor: Tim Post.
- Greater New Antioch Baptist Church, Monroe: **VBS – In the Wild**, June 24–28, 5-8 p.m. Pastor: John Russell II.
- Lakeshore Baptist Church, Monroe: **VBS – In the Wild**, June 24–28, 8:30 a.m. – noon. Pastor: William Smith.
- Bethel Baptist Church, Colfax: **The Southern Plainsmen in concert**, June 30, 6 p.m. After the concert, there will be food and fellowship. Pastor: Carl Gulde.
- Philadelphia Baptist Church, Deville: **4th of July Celebration**, June 30, 7 p.m. Pastor: Philip Robertson.
- Conway Baptist Church, Marion: **Recep-**

**tion honoring Paul Carter**, June 30, 3-5 p.m. There will be a reception at the church for Paul Carter for his 65 years in Gospel Ministry and for his 83rd birthday. The church is located at 4323 Hwy 549, Conway, LA 71260. Everyone is invited to attend.

- Ebenezer Baptist Church, Jonesboro: **Fifth Sunday singing**, June 30, 6 p.m. Pastor: Chris Lee.
- Alto Baptist Church, Alto: **God and Country Day**, June 30, 10:30 AM. A barbecue lunch will follow the service. Guest speaker: **Congressman Ralph Abraham**. Guest music: **Brothers In Christ**. Pastor: Alan Miller.
- Kingston Road Baptist Church, Shreveport: **Fifth Sunday Sing**, June 30, 4 p.m. Pastor: Jeremy Spurling.
- North Monroe Baptist Church, Monroe: **Dennis Swanberg**, June 30, 10 a.m. Speaker: Dennis Swanberg is known as America's Minister of Encouragement. Pastor: Bill Dye.
- Alto Baptist Church, Alto: **God and Country Day Celebration**, June 30, 10:30 AM. A barbecue lunch will follow the service. Guest speaker: **Con. Ralph Abraham**. Special Music: **Brothers In Christ**. Pastor: Alan Miller.
- First Baptist Church, Bernice: **Ben Waites in concert**, July 1, 6 p.m. Pastor: Michael McClintosh.

**IN REMEMBRANCE**

**Reverend Charles Richard Edwards** entered heaven on Monday, May 6, 2019 at the age of 91 with his family by his side. Born on February 7, 1928 in Bentonville, Arkansas to Dixon and Essie Young Edwards, he served in the Navy during World War II. Upon returning home he accepted Christ as his Savior and was ordained into the ministry on September 27, 1950 at First Baptist Church in Bentonville. He attended Ouachita Baptist University in Arkadelphia, Arkansas where he met his fu-

ture wife, Christine Campbell. They married on January 30, 1953. To This union four children were born including three daughters; Charlotte Thibodeaux of Perchville, Cheryl Turner (Timmy) of Richard, Connie Bertrand (Preston) of Eunice and a son, Danny Edwards (Bernadine) of Eunice. He is also survived by ten grandchildren and eighteen great grandchildren as well as many nieces and nephews. Edwards was preceded in death by his parents; Dixon and Essie Young Edwards of Bentonville, Arkansas, his wife of 64 years; Christine Campbell Edwards of Perchville, two brothers; Benny Edwards and Earl "Jack" Edwards of Bentonville, Arkansas, three sisters; Jewell Spurlock of Bentonville, Arkansas, Merle "Tookie" Page of Paragould, Arkansas, Thelma "Happy" Reich of Linden, California, son-in-law Robert Thibodeaux and great grandson Job Zaunbrecher. Edwards' ministry spanned over 50 years. After pastorate in Oklahoma and Arkansas, he moved to New Orleans to attend New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. In 1957, he became pastor of First Baptist Church, Melville. He then pastored First Baptist, Rayne, First Baptist, Raceland, Emmanuel Baptist, Eunice, Pilgrim Rest Baptist, Richard, Texas Avenue, DeRidder and Oberlin Baptist. In 1989 he came returned to Pilgrim Rest where he served until his retirement in 1999. He served as interim at Trinity Baptist Eunice until 2001 and Church Point Mission until 2004. Edwards loved living in South Louisiana among the Cajun people. One of his greatest desires was to learn to speak Cajun French. He loved the church members that he served and counted them as his "Louisiana Family." He and Chris had a heart for young people and served many summers at Acadia Baptist Center in Richard by operating the craft room during the summer months of camp. He also served as a counselor and Bible teacher at Dry Creek Baptist Camp in Dry Creek during the week of camp for boys and teen boys.

## 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.

pwo rnu kuswpwr dx epgdh vnpyy hu fw rnu sfivr

dx spwa cudcyu pv p ouq xkds rnu ydko, pv rnu

vndqukv jcdw rnu tkpvv, rnpr rpkkfurn wdr xdk rnu

spw, wdk qpfrun xdk rnu vdwv dx suw.

sfgpn xfiu:vuiuw

**Clues:**  
L = W; W = O

**Answer to June 6 Scripture Crypto:**  
First Peter four: ten

# Building the Kingdom in Avoyelles

By Brian Blackwell  
Message Staff Writer

MOUREAUVILLE – The oppressive summertime humidity was no match for a group of Kingdom Builders who, in early June, helped the first Louisiana Baptist church in Moreauville build a new multi-purpose facility to help expand the Gospel in the community.

A team of 57 people from 31 Louisiana Baptist churches, June 3-7, installed framing, sheetrock, wiring and plumbing inside the 2,880-square-foot Moreauville Community Church facility that will house a worship center and food pantry.

Once Kingdom Builders (mostly Baptists but who minister to all denominations) is done, Baptist Builders (Louisiana Baptist sponsored and Baptist focused), will finish any remaining work.

“We worked at a snail’s pace the first day and went through a week’s worth of Gatorade and water in the first day,” Kingdom Builders

President Randy Ray told the *Baptist Message*. “It’s hot out here but we are all staying hydrated as we carry on this important task.

“To me this is a picture of what a New Testament church is,” he said. “It’s a picture of cooperation when we have all these people from all these churches together to accomplish this kingdom purpose.”

Moreauville Community Church joins three other church plants established since 2010 in an Avoyelles Parish community that previously had no Louisiana Baptist congregation. The others are Life Point Community Church in Mansura, Point of Life Community Church in Plaucheville and Bayou Life Community Church in Cottonport.

Moreauville Community Church has received a church planting grant and a first unit building grant through the Louisiana Baptist missions and ministry team. These grants are possible thanks to the generosity of Louisiana

Baptist Churches in giving to the Georgia Barnette State Missions Offering and Cooperative Program.

“Brent Nations (pastor of the church) has done a great job and shown incredible resilience,” Louisiana Baptist church planting strategist Lane Corley said. “We’re very proud of his work and excited about what God is doing through Moreauville Community Church.”

This is the second project Kingdom Builders has completed this year, and the fourth such effort for them in Avoyelles Parish. In March, they installed framing for a new worship center at Liberty Baptist Church in Calhoun, whose facility was rebuilt after a tornado destroyed it in the spring of 2018.

According to its website, Kingdom Builders is a construction mission group established in 1998. The ministry’s first official action was building a church in Mandaree, North Dakota.

Linda Butler, secretary for Kingdom Builders, said



Brian Blackwell photo

Brent Nations, pastor of Moreauville Community Church, was grateful for Randy Ray and his Kingdom Builders volunteers. The group recently helped build a new worship center and food pantry for the congregation.

the effort is a visible reminder that Christ followers always are on mission for Him.

“You are a missionary forever,” Butler said. “We are out here to help build for Avoyelles Parish this new church, which will give them an opportunity to have a facility to hand out clothes and build a chance to share the Gospel too.”

Nations said this church planting effort has been three years in the making.

The core group, which now is 25 strong, began meeting in homes in January 2016, and in August 2018 purchased

a large piece of property that included a small building where they currently worship.

Nations hopes they can hold their first worship service in the new building sometime in the fall.

“This is a true miracle,” Nations said. “We’ve wanted this type of facility for so long and are grateful for those who came out to help us build it. This will allow us to have a ministry to serve and help this community as we meet their needs physically and spiritually.”



never forget the first time I head those four magic words - All you can eat!

As aspiring athletes, my football teammates and I gladly accepted the “buffet challenge.” I’m not sure how many slices of pizza I consumed, but I was proud of myself and I’m sure the restaurant was relieved to see me waddle out the door.

Did you know Jesus talked about those four magic words? Okay, he didn’t specifically say, “All you can eat,” but in Matthew 9 He said, “The harvest is plentiful.” I like the way the Common English Bible puts it, “The size of the harvest is bigger than you can imagine.”

So, in a sense, He’s saying go get all you want. There is no shortage in the field.

## Are we hungry?

With that in mind, my question for us is, “are we hungry?” Will we take Jesus at His word and gather all we can or will we stay in our buildings and wonder why no one is coming?

In Luke 14 Jesus tells the parable of the banquet, but no one wants to come. He broadens the invitation yet there are still vacant seats. In one last attempt to fill his table, he tells his servants to go into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in so his table will be full.

*God offers a feast for all who will come and there is no shortage of people to fill those seats – if we’ll go get them.*

We’ve got their invitation, what are we going to do with it? What if we actually decided to go for it? What if we used every possible strategy to make sure they get an opportunity to say, “Yes!” to the only One who can fill their lives with purpose meaning, and hope. Our message has eternal consequences and rewards. Jesus commands us to go. It would be a tragedy if we chose to stay.

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Visit [LouisianaBaptists.org/hereforyou](http://LouisianaBaptists.org/hereforyou), enter **luke1423** and learn how your church can connect with this opportunity.