Johnson: Christians need to prepare for the approaching storm

“I really do feel like Louisiana Baptists have a particular responsibility. We shouldn’t take for granted what we have,” he said. “We need to be aware, but not afraid.”

His legal organization, Freedom Guard, is ready to assist any organization that comes under fire. “On June 26th, five of the nine-member Supreme Court ruled in Obergefell v. Hodges to usurp the authority of the people and force same-sex marriage on all 50 states by judicial fiat,” Johnson said, expressing the outrage of his fellow conservative legislators as they watched years of hard-fought court victories dismantled and over-ruled.

Johnson warned this latest ruling changed the playing field and that future battles will be aimed at the Bible Belt. The three-pronged strategy will include: targeting Christians and their associations, including schools, colleges, businesses and churches; impose fines and penalties and bring legal action against them, and try to intimidate and silence with threats that overstate their powers.

“People who are listening to you are the remnant of the Christian faith in America. It is an incredible responsibility,” Johnson said. “If we lose these next critical battles, it’s over. There is no hope for religious freedom. I’m not overstating. I hope you understand where this is headed.”

But the news isn’t all bad. “People who are listening to you have a greater responsibility. We shouldn’t take for granted what we have,” he said. “We need to be aware, but not afraid.”

Duck Dynasty ‘first family’ shares a pro-life message

By Will Hall

NEW ORLEANS – At the National Right to Life Convention Prayer Breakfast July 11, three members of the “first family” of Louisiana bared the sin, repentance and redemption of their experiences with abortion – in order to proclaim in agreement that all life is precious.

Oldest son Alan Robertson, his wife Lisa and his mother “Miss” Kay shared their individual stories of poor choices to have sex before marriage, and the real life consequences of those decisions, but also stressed how God’s grace healed their hurts and reclaimed their lives.

It is a part of the Duck Dynasty story that has not made it into one of the episodes of the A&E blockbuster reality show, even though the family has been faithful in sharing this testimony around the country.

STRONG FOUNDATION

As a young girl in a little bitty town, Miss Kay said the best thing that happened to her was being raised by her grand-mother. “She was a Christian lady. She only went to school until she was 13 or 14, I think. And at 15, she married and moved out.”

“So she had a limited education, but it didn’t matter,” she said. “She had a heart of gold and she loved God, and she loved the Bible.”

Those foundations shaped her grandmother and in turn shaped her, Miss Kay said.
“We talk about the gathering storm but we know how the book ends. First Peter 3:15 says to always be prepared to give an answer for the hope that we have. And we know that we have great reason for hope,” Johnson said.

Pulling from the annals of history, Johnson reminded the crowd of the factual account of America’s Christian heritage, quoting the founding fathers and the principles they followed.

“The Bible is part of who we are. It’s part of our DNA,” Johnson said, “but we have this new generation who doesn’t understand our foundations.”

He recapped the cultural shifts of the last 100 years that have taken America from being a Christian nation to being a post-Christian one, clarifying how the decisions made by the higher courts in the early 20th century trickled down over the next few decades to create a society that has no moral absolutes. He reminded listeners that they still have rights and should not be intimidated by political activists.

Fourth District U.S. Rep. John Fleming was also in attendance and spoke in agreement with Johnson.

“What Washingtonians want to do is push us inside our churches and make us lock the doors, embarrassed to come out. And once we’re in there, they want to come at us even there,” he said. “We’re going along with preparing legally for what’s ahead, Johnson also emphasized the importance of world-view training for children, quoting a Columbia University survey three years ago that said nine out of ten Christian students abandon the religious faith of their parents when they go to college.

“The Bible has to serve as an analytical grid for how they process what the world and culture is throwing at them at a rapid pace. It’s not the same world you grew up in,” he said. “Discipleship is the answer. We’ve got to have a spiritual revival in this country. It’s the only solution.”

Lastly, Johnson and Fleming both emphasized the importance of electing the right people. Fleming said that for the first time in 100 years, there are full services every week in the basement of the capital of the United States and that there are many Bible studies.

“There are very alive Christians there, we’re just outnumbered,” Fleming said. “We need for you to be thinking about that when you go to the ballot box – who are you voting for and what do they stand for? Elections have consequences.”

Johnson agreed, “The next president will probably elect three Supreme Court Justices, and that is the longest legacy by far of any president – some of them serve for forty years in the court. We cannot overstate the importance of that.”

Johnson and the Freedom Guard plan to do four more meetings around the state in the next few weeks to answer the questions generated by the new Supreme Court rulings, his primary message being one of encouragement to stand strong.

“This is not a time to stay in our safe four walls. They are going to break those walls down and prevent your ability to pass this on to your children and grandchildren. We don’t serve a namby-pamby God but Jesus said we’re supposed to be salt and light – go out and engage the culture,” he said.

For more information on how to begin putting legal protections in place for your church or organization, visit Freedom Guard’s website. To protect the questions generated by the new Supreme Court rulings, his primary message being one of encouragement to stand strong.

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Karen Pearce photo
Landry’s short-lived retirement opens the door to planting churches

By Brian Blackwell

MANSURA – The retirement years may bring about visions of spending time at the grandchildrens’ home, traveling around the country in an RV or catching catfish for an entire day at an area lake.

However, for Norris Landry, retiring meant one thing – planting a church in a community with little evangelical presence.

“I was comfortable and everything was great,” said Landry, who retired as pastor of Hessmer Baptist Church last December to serve as a church planter at Point of Life Community Church in Plaucheville. “But I was uncomfortable that I wasn’t doing what God wanted me to do. I don’t know if I will ever retire. As long as I am able to, I will serve.”

Landry, who learned to speak the French language as a young boy growing up in Pierre Part, felt called to reach Cajun country with the gospel while attending classes in 1980 at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and serving as pastor of First Baptist Church in Head of Island.

A year later, Landry began serving as pastor of Loreauville Mission Church, a mission of First Baptist Church in Bunkie, while co-pastoring five miles away at Coteau Holmes Mission. He remained there until Hessmer Baptist Church called Landry to serve as its pastor in 1996.

Once he stepped down as pastor of Hessmer Baptist Church, he remained a grand total of 12 hours.

When Life Point Church Pastor Jacob Crawford asked Landry to come aboard as associate pastor of the Mansura campus and church planter in Plaucheville, he realized the challenge before him. According to a demographic profile by the North American Mission Board, in 2013 less than 1 percent of the population of the Plaucheville area attended a Southern Baptist church.

“Last fall when Jacob Crawford told me of his vision for planting churches in Plaucheville, I came to the conclusion this is where I need to be,” Landry said. “I realized it would be tough job. As I started visiting everywhere in Plaucheville, people were very friendly but reminded me this is a Catholic community.

Even though no official worship service has begun, Landry has organized a Bible study that has met since February. The average attendance is between 12 and 14, though a high attendance of 23 occurred in late April.

Landry hopes eventually to build a structure to house worship services and a compassion ministry on the property, much like at Life Point’s Mansura campus.

There, around 180 worship each Sunday in the worship center that was completed in February 2014 and around 330 families a month receive boxes of food at the ministry center that opened in July 2014.

Volunteers from Hessmer Baptist Church primarily staff the ministry center, which is operated through donations primarily from the Church at Marksville, First Baptist Church in Zachary and Hessmer Baptist Church. Nearly 400 dollars a month is used as income for the center, generated by sales from a thrift store located inside the ministry center.

The Baptist Mission Builders constructed the worship center while the Kingdom Builders constructed the mission center.

Point of Life Community Church is not the only church Life Point Church has planted.

Louis Charrier, who has planted numerous churches throughout the state, has started Bayou Life Church at Life Point’s Mansura campus. Louis started Bayou Life Church at Life Point’s church in Cottonport. Reginald Arvie is pastor of St. James Baptist Church in Bunkie, which is meeting at Bunkie Pavillion.

Both churches started in May. Crawford said the pastors like Landry are an inspiration to him.

“Not only is he one of my mentors; he is my friend,” Crawford said. “It has been like a breath of fresh air having him on staff. He and Ms. Donna (Landry) have brought spiritual maturity and stability to our church.”

As for its main campus in Mansura and church plants in Bunkie, Cottonport and Plaucheville, Crawford believes the future is bright.

“It’s our goal as a church, Life Point, not to necessarily continue to grow upwards,” he said. “We want to grow out.”

Norris Landry stands in front of Life Point Community Church in Mansura. Landry retired as pastor of Hessmer Baptist Church last December but his retirement was short-lived. Jacob Crawford of Life Point Community Church convinced him to come and serve as associate pastor and he has planted a church in Plaucheville, Point of Life Community Church where he serves as its pastor.
Transgender politics prove ‘the emperor is wearing no clothes’

ALEXANDRIA – The mainstream media are adoring toward Bruce Jenner’s “courageous” transition to “Caitlyn;” schools are introducing curriculums teaching sexual identity is a fluid concept and not a biological construct; and, the U.S. military has announced it is studying “the policy and readiness implications of welcoming transgender persons to serve openly … with the presumption that transgender persons can serve openly without adverse impact on military effectiveness and readiness, unless and except where objective, practical impediments are identified.”

Remarkably, this push toward redefining sexual identity as “ambiguous” comes as homosexual activists just won legal recognition for gay marriage from the U.S. Supreme Court. And, ironically, it contradicts what Associate Justice Anthony Kennedy wrote in justifying the majority decision—sexual orientation is both a normal expression of human sexual-ity and immutable” (in other words, “fixed”).

In a long-term study that followed 324 people who had sex-reassignment surgery, researchers found transexual indi-viduals began to experience increasing mental difficulties about 10 years after having the surgery, he said. Notably, this cohort experienced a suicide mortality rate almost 20 times more than the non-transgender popula-tion.

McHugh has concluded that the high suicide rate “certainly challenges the surgery prescription” and in view of all the medical research, he believes “‘sex change’ is biologically impos-sible.”

In a case that seems to make McHugh’s argument is the up and down life of transsexual Renee Rich-ards.

Richards, born Richard Raskind but with sex-reassignment surgery, gained notoriety in 1977 after the New York Supreme Court ruled Richards could compete in professional tennis as a woman.

Richards became a superstar after that, not for tennis play, but for being a pioneer of sorts for the sexual revolu-tion in America.

However, over the years Richards alternately has expressed happiness with the change, stated regrets over the choice, and made comments some-where in between.

In February 1999, Richards gave a qualified yes and no to the Associated Press. “If you’re 18 or 20 and never had the kind of (advantages) I had, and you’re oriented in that direction, sure, go ahead and make right what nature didn’t. But if you’re a 45-year-old man and you’re an airline pilot and you have an ex-wife and three adolescent kids, you better get on Thorazine or Zoloft or Prozac or get locked up or do whatever it takes to keep you from be-coming allowed to do something like this.”

Just one month later, Richards was more emphatic on a personal level. “If there was a drug that I could have taken that would have reduced the pressure, I would have been better off staying the way I was -- totally intact person,” Richards told Tennis Magazine. “I know deep down that I’m a second-class woman. I get a lot of inquiries from would-be transsexuals, but I don’t want anyone to hold me out as an example to follow. Today there are better choices, including medica-tion, for dealing with the compulsion to crossdress and the depression that comes from gender confusion. As far as being fulfilled as a woman, I’m not as fulfilled as I dreamed of being. I get a lot of letters from people who are considering having this operation...and I discourage them all.”

Now, despite medical evidence and what is obvious in nature, Bruce Jenner, the Olympian named Associate Press Male Athlete of the Year in 1976, is receiving accolades and awards for having “the courage to embrace a truth that had been hidden for years” (be-cause of a name change to “Caitlyn” and for advocacy of transsexual rights); Fairfax County students will be taught that sexuality is “a broader spectrum” than male and female; and, the U.S. military is moving to “unisex war-rriors.”

With all my heart, I believe Christ is King and still sits on His Throne. But truly political correctness is the emperor that is wearing no clothes.

Abraham’s altar: Worship must be a priority in our lives

LAFAYETTE – Abraham’s story in Genesis 12 is a model story of what it means to take God at His word and obey. I have always been amazed at Abram’s faith depicted in this account. As I have often summarized about this story, “God said to Abram ‘Get up and go,’” Amerah and said, “I will give this land to your offspring.” So he built an altar there to the LORD who had appeared to him. 8 From there he moved on to the hill country east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. He built an altar there to the LORD, and he called on the name of Yahweh.

In chapter 13, we see the indication of additional altars. The first is the return to the altar between Bethel and Ai: 1 Then Abram went up from Egypt’s south and came to Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. 2 God was with Abram. 3 He dwelt by stages from the Negeb to Bethel, to the place of the oak between Bethel and Ai where his tent had formerly been, 4 to the site where he had built the altar: And Abram called on the name of Yahweh there. 5 And, then once more in chapter 13, we read about the building of an altar: 18 So Abram moved his tent and went to live near the oaks of Mamre at Hebron, where he built an altar to the LORD.

When did Abram build these altars? Immediately! He built the altar when arrived at a place to establish a home. Why did he build these altars? He built the altar to worship God. Where did he build? He built at the new places he arrived to establish a home. All of this speaks to the priority of worship!

Did Abram always build an altar? Sadly, Abram did not always build an altar. His encounter with the Pha-raoh in Egypt, Genesis 12:10-20, tells us of the story. Do you see the lesson? When worship is not the priority, we are most susceptible to disobedience.

We cannot neglect worship in our lives. We cannot neglect corporate worship. Corporate gathering of wor-ship must be a priority in our lives. We cannot neglect individual worship. Daily worship must be a priority. When we make one step away from worship, we are making a step toward disobedience. Do you need to go back between Bethel and Ai? Will Horn

Your Letter

SEND US YOUR LETTERS

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NEW ORLEANS – Holding up a piece of paper, Slade Simons asks a dozen inner-city New Orleans youth to dream.

“What do you want to do for a career?” Simons asks the elementary aged youth. “Just write it down on a piece of paper, two or three things you need to do to have that career.

“What are the things you need to do now, to do in high school and to do in college?” he continues. “I want you to begin with some of the goals you want to set. While you’re young you need to be thinking about that.

“A goal does not tell you where you are,” he says. “A goal just identifies where you want to go.”

Every Wednesday afternoon, Simons is teaching the youngsters life lessons to give them hope through the Summit, a ministry of First Baptist Church in New Orleans.

A team of volunteers that includes Simons spend time with the kids at the church, through tutoring, reading skills development and hands-on learning activities.

But not before taking the young-
sters on a field trip to a variety of locations.

One week the students may be visiting a costume shop that outfits many of the Hollywood movies made in New Orleans and the following Wednesday touring the corporate office of a spice maker.

Other field trips have included stopping at the projection room of a movie theatre and performing experiments inside the Xavier University chemistry department.

They have even visited offices of a business on the 29th floor of a downtown skyscraper, which included a ride on an elevator, something so simple that many Louisianans may take for granted but yet only a handful of the youth had done previously.

Simons said the field trips along with Vacation Bible Schools and summer camps are designed to help the youth develop their skills and encourage their interests.

And as an added bonus – during the past two summers, five of the kids have accepted Christ as their personal Lord and Savior.

“One of the greatest ways to have hope is to have a vision of what is possible in the future,” Simons said. “To that end, we take the kids on field trips to various businesses in the city of New Orleans so that they can see for themselves what a future of hope and stability looks like. They can see how their education today can be part of their future.

“I want them to see the various types of jobs that are available and I want them to see themselves as capable of having any of the jobs they see,” he continued. “I want them to know the difference between manufacturing and service. I want them to know the difference between getting paid for what they know versus paid for what they can do. I want them to know that either is fine and both are available. I want them to explore the opportunities in their minds and their imaginations. I want there to be hope – the feeling that what is wanted can actually be had. The kids have a narrow world view and I want to help them expand that view to include choices, opportunities and hope.”

Among the students who has learned about that hope is sixth grader Jeremy Grimes.

He said that if it weren’t for the Summit, he would be spending his Wednesdays after school at home in the neighborhood, where there is a potential for getting into mischief.

Grimes said the time the volunteers spend with he and the other kids is something he’ll never forget.

“They invest in their time and invest in us,” he said. “I have learned you have to give people who don’t have love and care and be respectful.”

Simons said that while the Summit’s activities are organized, developed relationships with students such as Grimes have been one of the greatest blessings since the ministry started in September 2012.

“The success of Summit has really been driven by the volunteers that God has provided,” Simons said. “Our volunteers and college staff have a heart for the kids that cannot be taught or paid for. They are great people who have a sincere love for the kids and a desire to love them like their own family. And the kids have responded in kind.

“They know that we love them and want what is best for them,” he continued. “Our leaders have earned the right to be heard and the kids trust them when they speak and offer instruction, correction or guidance.”
“She would read it to me. Also, we had so many discussions about its applications, she added, “in her simple words.”

This was important because both her parents drank, and her father died while she was still a young girl. Importantly, she said, her grandmother taught her “one man and one wife for one life.”

MORAL COMPROMISE & CONVICTION

Through these many life lessons, Miss Kay learned that sin was sin.

But when she met her “pioneer man” in Phil Robertson, and “knew” he was the man she was going to marry, she convinced herself that pledging to God that he was her husband was sufficient enough and even to God that he was her husband.

She resolved to “never, never take that baby away, ‘cause he was ours.”

BAD BEGINNING, GREAT FINISH

Alan Robertson served White’s Ferry Road Church of Christ in West Monroe for 22 years before joining the Duck Dynasty cast two years ago, but he expressed regret for leading his “good girl” wife “down some bad paths” as a teenager.

“My lifestyle had gotten to the point of being a ‘prodigal son’ right in my hometown. Dad had to sit me down, and he said, ‘Al, you can’t live this way and stay here.’”

In high school Alan had taken notice of Lisa, who had become “quite the looker. My life was so bad and I introduced that goes by she doesn’t regret having had an abortion as a 16-year-old. Life Convention Prayer Breakfast in New Orleans that there is not a day except God. She realizes now no one has the right to take a life except God.

She was ready to renew her relationship with Alan. But, a youth group – I really didn’t know what to do. “I was a 16 year old and pregnant. I had no one to talk to. I was an unwed mother. And if there was a [pregnancy] center somewhere, I really was not familiar with it,” Lisa said.

“So, I really did not know what to do.

“I turned to the people that I thought knew best. No blame whatsoever,” she offered, but, “I turned to my parents, and, of course, they did not think that it was a good idea for me to have a child at 16.”

She said her boyfriend at the time was in love with her and really wanted to keep the baby.

“But in the back of my mind, at 16, I had the idea of the guy that I had lost my virginity to at 15 – who was in New Orleans having a heyday – and I thought ‘You know. If I have this baby, when he comes back, I’m going to be the last person that he looks up and says, ‘Hey, how ‘bout a date,’” she said.

“So, really at 16, in my feeble little mind – I had no church family. You know, just think about it: You’re 16 and you’re sleeping around. So, you’re probably really not into going to church and being in a youth group. – I really didn’t have anybody to talk to. So, I was urged to have an abortion, and I did.”

She said no one was at fault, except herself, and she has awakened almost every day for 30 years, plus, “and thought of the decision.”

Citing Psalm 139, she said she realizes now no one has the right to take a life except God.

“I’m grateful Miss Kay chose life,” she said, “because I have a wonderful husband. I am very grateful my own mother chose life.”

But she said obedience to God “is the most important reason for us to choose life” and we should trust in His plan for each and every life.

“We could have a cure for cancer. We could have … world peace,” she offered.

“We have no idea what we have lost in aborting our babies.”

BURDENED BUT HOPEFUL

Closing out the Prayer Breakfast, Alan shared that “the life issue to our family is very important.”

One good outcome from the calamitous decisions they have made, he said, is that he and his wife have produced resources for young women at pregnancy centers “on both sides of this” issue – a cautionary word to girls to practice abstinence before marriage, and, to those who have gotten pregnant and even

Lisa Robertson, the wife of Alan, told the crowd at the National Right to Life Convention Prayer Breakfast in New Orleans that there is not a day that goes by she doesn’t regret having had an abortion as a 16-year-old. “I’m still grateful to that officer and I can’t wait to meet him one day in Heaven,” he said, especially to finally learn his name.

WAYWARD STEPS TO THE RIGHT PATH

After that encounter, Alan returned home and found his mom and dad waiting with open arms … and Lisa dating another boy pretty seriously, just as she was about to graduate high school.

She was ready to renew her relationship with Alan. But, a lot had happened since she last saw him.
Planned Parenthood, in new video, prices baby parts

By David Roach
Baptist Press

NASHVILLE (BP) – A second undercover video released July 21 by the Center for Medical Progress appears to show a Planned Parenthood doctor negotiating the price of baby parts obtained through abortion and discussing the possibility of varying abortion procedures to harvest intact organs.

At one point in the video, a woman identified as Mary Gatter, former president of the Planned Parenthood Medical Directors’ Council, speaks of using “a less crunchy technique” of aborting babies to preserve “more whole specimens.” She also jokes, “I want a Lamborghini,” when negotiating the price of fetal tissue. “The prices are pure profit,” Daleiden said.

“We don’t want to be accused of anything and will steadfastly maintain their innocence even in the face of the most shocking evidence,” Daleiden said. “We’re not in it for the money” and “we don’t want to be in a position of being accused of selling tissue.”

Gatter appears to settle on a price of $100 per “specimen” but says she wants to investigate what other abortion providers are receiving. The video includes text stating it was shot Feb. 6 by investigators posing as a fetal tissue procurement company.

David Daleiden, senior investigator for the Center for Medical Progress, told LifeSiteNews CMP’s latest video suggests Planned Parenthood violated federal laws that prohibit profiting from the sale of human remains and altering abortion techniques to obtain tissue.

“As we all know by now, Planned Parenthood does not want to be accused of anything and will steadfastly maintain their innocence even in the face of the most shocking evidence,” Daleiden said. “The prices are pure profit that go far and above any real or imagined costs [Planned Parenthood] might have in handing over aborted babies to another company’s technicians.”

The video opens with a clip of Cecile Richards, president of the Planned Parenthood Federation of America, denying that her organization profited from the sale of fetal tissue in response to the release by CMP last week of a separate video showing a Planned Parenthood doctor discussing the sale of baby parts. The latest video then cuts to Gatter negotiating the price of fetal tissue.

Owen Strachan, associate professor of Christian theology at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, wrote in a blog post that Gatter’s statement about “a less crunchy technique” may be “the worst” thing he has ever heard.

“Please note that Planned Parenthood does not dispute killing babies in utero and trafficking baby body parts for pay.”

Two U.S. House committees continue to investigate Planned Parenthood along with seven states – Arizona, Missouri, Texas, Louisiana, Indiana, Ohio and Georgia.

“Why aren’t ALL Christians crying out re: the barbaric, Nazi-like actions of #PlannedParenthood re: selling aborted babies & their organs?”

David Prince, pastor of Ashland Avenue Baptist Church in Lexington, Ky., tweeted, “Folks, if you had removed evil from your vocabulary – it should return.”

Denny Burk, professor of biblical studies at Boyce College, responded to a Planned Parenthood tweet claiming, “The extremists behind the #PlannedParenthood videos spent 3 years creating a shell company, built a phony non-profit [and] may have broken tax law.”

Burk replied, “Please note that Planned Parenthood does not dispute killing babies in utero and trafficking baby body parts for pay.”

“Folks, if you had any shame of the bodies of little children. Their desire is not to protect and cherish these bodies, but to break as few bones and body parts as possible in order to get maximum bang for the buck.”

“Behold depravity,” continued Strachan, who also serves as president of the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood. “Behold original sin, bubbling to the surface. Behold the heart of darkness, which we all have.”

Christians must share the Gospel with pro-choice activists during this “moment of decision for Americans who support abortion,” Strachan wrote. “The lid has come off. The work is exposed. Will [abortion supporters] put a pillow over their conscience? Will they suffocate it? Or will they allow it to live, breathe, and function once more?”

Other Southern Baptists took to Twitter in response to the latest CMP video.

Steve Gaines, pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in Cordova, Tenn., tweeted, “Why aren’t ALL Christians crying out re: the barbaric, Nazi-like actions of #PlannedParenthood re: selling aborted babies & their organs?”

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Two U.S. House committees continue to investigate Planned Parenthood along with seven states – Arizona, Missouri, Texas, Louisiana, Indiana, Ohio and Georgia.
A native of Pineville, Pruitt was exposed to music at an early age. When she was nearly five – a year after she moved with her family to Iota in 1928 – Pruitt received from her mother her first musical instrument, a violin. “It seemed to come easy to me but I was so small, I couldn’t tune it,” Pruitt recalls. “Whenever I needed to tune it, I called my mother in to help me. That got a little monotonous for both of us, so eventually she found a nun who taught me piano lessons.”

Yet none of that means as much to 90-year-old Joanna Pruitt as the way she has used her musical talent to open doors for missions.

“My playing for the church has been a tithe of my talent,” said Pruitt, who used her musical talent to lead music at an early age. When she was nearly five, Pruitt bought a fourth instrument, the clarinet, which considered a major instrument. However, her teaching career in the school system ended in 1949, when she moved to Crowley to help care for her mother who had suffered a heart attack.

But caring for her mom wasn’t the only new responsibility God presented that year to Pruitt. That year marked the beginning of a new career – teaching private piano lessons, a job she held for the next 55 years. Also, in 1949 Pruitt assumed her role as pianist at First Baptist Crowley. As a piano teacher, Pruitt enjoyed taking students to various district festival performances and seeing some grow as pianists through hours and hours of lessons.

As a church pianist, Pruitt was honored to use her musical talent as a way to further the kingdom, both in Crowley and around the world. During most of her mission trips that included Arizona, Arkansas, Australia, Brazil, Costa Rica, Illinois, New Mexico, South Dakota and South Korea, Pruitt was able to play the piano. She even made a CD of her piano music, with proceeds benefiting her church missions efforts. Included on the CD were such songs as Jesus Loves Me, Precious Memories and On Jordan’s Stormy Banks.

Looking back on her life, Pruitt feels humbled and honored to have lived such a fruitful life, serving with so much to 90-year-old Joanna Pruitt: ‘tithes’ her musical gift to God, missions trips
By Karen Pearce  
Regional Reporter

SHREVEPORT – Warmth enveloped Jasmine when she came up from the baptismal waters at Broadmoor Baptist Church.

“Everything was warm around me and I was feeling happiness and like finally I’m complete,” she said. “I can say it now aloud... ‘That’s me, that’s what I am, I am Baptist.’”

“I can say it out loud now. ‘That’s me, that’s what I am, I am Baptist,’” Jasmine, a Bosnian immigrant, said after being baptized by Donny Durr, minister of business administration at Broadmoor Baptist Church in Shreveport.

Although being Baptist is a common thing in Jasmine’s current home state of Louisiana, it is quite unusual in her home country. She grew up in Bosnia where Islam, Orthodoxy and Catholicism vie for prominence. She was born into a Muslim family -- her grandfather was Catholic, her grandmother was Orthodox, and her mother was a Muslim.

She always said there is just one God and God will help you. That was her way – to find God, to believe that He’s a savior, He’s a father,” Jasmine said. Her mother’s faith opened the way for Jasmine to seek.

Today, Jasmine knows that she has met the true God, Jesus Christ, and she has taken the brave step to publically declare her faith in Him alone for her salvation.

“I was worried about how they would use it against me in my country,” Jasmine said.

But her father, who is now a believer, encouraged her to follow through with baptism.

“He said to me, ‘You are ready now, you accepted Christ, I don’t know what you are waiting for. Don’t worry. Don’t be afraid,’” she said.

Jasmine’s father still resides in Bosnia, living his faith despite the dangers, while Jasmine moved to Shreveport, two years ago, seeking a better future for her children. It was there she came to know the God who had been caring for her all her life.

“He was like my father. Jesus Christ was my father and I didn’t know,” Jasmine said. “He always took my hand through the whole way and tried to show me, ‘That’s Me, that’s Me,’ but I didn’t understand.

Jasmine held out three fingers and said there were three milestones in her journey.

First was God’s protection and provision when there was war in her country and she had to flee as a refugee as an 18-year-old girl. Second was the miraculous healing of her injured eye a decade ago, a situation that compelled her father to become outspoken about his newfound faith in Christ. And third was when she met Mack and Pam Slocum at a Shreveport high school during her daughter’s freshman orientation two years ago.

Only one month after moving from Bosnia, she had no idea what to do. Mack offered a helping hand and an invitation to his Sunday School class.

She knows God put him in her path to show her the way.

“First thing I do I always do, I always pray. ‘First thing I do I always pray,’” Mack said. “It’s incredible. I was so proud of our folks -- good, kindhearted, loving people.”

Jasmine’s life, amid the miraculous milestones, has had some tragic chapters. Her mother died of leukemia a few years ago, her father is blind, and she herself has won a battle with cancer. She is beginning to build a new life in a new country with nothing but her family and faith, but Jasmine continues to praise God for all He has done for her. She reads her Bible daily and prays with thanksgiving.

“First thing I do I always say, ‘Dear God, You are my Father, You’re the greatest, You’re the only one, my Savior. Thank You for all the good You have done for me,’” she said.
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Louisiana Baptist Children’s Homes is seeking full time social workers for the Alexandria and Baton Rouge areas.
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If interested, please submit a resume to beth@lbch.org or send to Louisiana Baptist Children’s Home, P.O. Box 4196, Monroe, LA 71211.

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had an abortion,” “a hope for redemption … to be something different.”

“I don’t know about you, but these days I feel sometimes like Elijah,” he offered, as a preface to ending his remarks, “sitting under a broom tree wondering why God just doesn’t take me on, because it seems like the entire nation has bowed their knee to Baal with some of the decisions that are being made.”

But, he reminded the crowd, God told Elijah He had those out there waiting to stand up and be counted.

“Elijah was ready to give up, and sometimes I am, too,” he said. “But God told Elijah in a gentle whisper, ‘I’ve got work for you to do.’”

“So keep on doing what you are doing, and, commit to this verse in John 10:

“Therefore Jesus said again, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever receives someone whom I send receives me, and whoever receives me receives Him who sent me.’”

“Making a Life Commitment

U.S. Sen. David Vitter (R-La.) gave opening remarks for the Prayer Breakfast, saying in part he was thankful to those in attendance for their commitment and passion to the pro-life cause.

“We share that in Louisiana. By almost any metric, I’m very proud to say, Louisiana is perhaps the most pro-life state and culture in the nation,” he said.

“And we are very, very proud of that and we’re going to keep it that way, absolutely.”

“Everyone knows we have a ‘joie de vivre’ [French for joy of life], but to have a ‘joie de vivre’ you have to have a respect for life first – and we do and we’ll continue to do that.

“We’ll continue to work with you to expand that respect for life and ‘joie de vivre’ all through our culture.”

Vitter has served in the U.S. Senate since 2005, but in 2014 announced his candidacy for governor of Louisiana to replace Bobby Jindal, who will vacate the top state office upon completing his second term in January 2016. Jindal has entered the 2016 presidential race.

The Robertson’s remarks and Sen. Vitter’s comments may be heard in full at the National Right to Life Convention website.

LOUISIANA NOTABLES

ON THE MOVE

Larry Sylvester is new as pastor at Lewiston Baptist Church, Kentwood.

Scott Spiss is new as pastor at Mt. Pisgah Baptist Church, Hiram, Ga.

Russell Zwemer is new as associate pastor at Victory Baptist Church, Walker.

Mark (wife Paula) Norwood is new as pastor at First Baptist Church, Patterson.

Kent Spaw has resigned as senior pastor at Bayou Plaquemine Baptist Church.

Nathan Coleman is new as youth director at North Shreve Baptist Church, Shreveport.

Kelly (husband Chris) Pyle is new as children’s director at Kuran Baptist Church, Haughton.

HOMECOMING

Turkey Creek Baptist Church, Gilbert: 97th Homecoming Celebration, Aug. 2, 10:45 a.m. The homecoming celebration will take place in the church’s new sanctuary in which the first service was held on July 5. The old sanctuary was destroyed by a fire Dec. 4, 2013. Everyone is invited to attend. Pastor: Kyle Spinks.

Ebenzer Baptist Church, Jone山村: 165th Homecoming, Aug. 9, 8:30 a.m. A meal will follow the service in the Family Life Center. Speaker: Clevis Sturdivant. Pastor: Randy Lee.

First Baptist Church, Greensburg: 149th Homecoming – dinner on the grounds, Aug. 9, Sunday school, 9:15 a.m.; Worship services, 10:10 a.m. with dinner on the grounds following at noon. Speaker: Tim Levert. Worship: Tasha Levert. Please join us with our friends as we celebrate what the Lord has done for our church through the years. For more information or directions, call 225.222.6580. Pastor: Tommy Smith.

REVIVAL


River Park Baptist Church, Ponchatoula: Revival Service, Aug. 7, 7 p.m. Cost: $10 general admission. Tickets are available at itickets.com; calling 800.965.9324 or by calling FBC church office during regular office hours at 337.233.1412. Pastor: Steve Horn.

Wood PGA Champions Extension of Hope, Aug. 7-9. Concert: The Hoppers in concert, July 30, 7 p.m. Cost: $10 general admission. Tickets are available at itickets.com; calling 800.965.9324 or by calling FBC church office during regular office hours at 337.233.1412. Pastor: Steve Horn.

Westside Baptist Church, Natchitoches: What Now? What does the same-sex marriage decision mean to your church and religious freedom in America? July 30, 7 p.m. Speaker: Mike Johnson, Louisiana State Representative and constitutional law attorney. He will discuss the five things every Louisiana church should do right now to protect against future challenges. Pastor: Steve McAlister.


Longview Baptist Church, Deville: Community-wide Gospel singing, July 31, 7 p.m. Pastor: Bobby Poole.

First Baptist Church, Bonita: Fifth Friday night singing, July 31, 6 p.m. There will be a free fish fry at 5 p.m. Singers and musicians are invited to come and share their songs and talents. Pastor: Fred Bryan.

Satsuma Baptist Church, Livingston: The church will give away 120 backpacks to local school children. Aug. 1, 11 a.m. Children must be present to receive backpacks. There will be food, games and door prizes. For more information, call the church office at 225.686.5636. Pastor: Brad Delaughter.

Foster Road Baptist Church, Baton Rouge: Friday Night Worship at Foster Road, Aug. 7, 14, 21, 28, 6 p.m. (wesleyan service), 7 p.m. (worship service). For the month of August, Foster Road Baptist Church will host a Fellowship Meal and Worship Service. Speakers: Aug. 7 – Marvin Parks. In His Hands Baptist Church, Aug. 14 – Jason McLaughton, First Baptist Church, New Roads; Aug. 21 – John Burnham, First Baptist Church, Gramercy, and Aug. 28 – Huey Moak, Fellowship Baptist Church. Services will take place in the gym. For more information, call 225.775.0884 or go online to www.firstfosterroad.org. Pastor: Michael Morris.


First Baptist Church, Delhi: The Booth Brothers in concert, Aug. 7, 7 p.m. Tickets: $15 advance or $20 at the door. Tickets are available at the church office. Children five and under do not need a ticket. The Booth Brothers are America’s No. 1 Southern Gospel Group and this will be their only appearance in Louisiana for 2015. Pastor: Lindsey Burns.

Judson Baptist Retreat Center, St. Francisville: Quarterly Fish Fry featuring the Wood Creek Boys, Aug. 11, registration 9:30 – 10 a.m.; Music: 10 a.m.; Lunch: 11:45 a.m. The Wood Creek Boys play ‘good ole Gospel tunes’ in an acoustic/bluegrass style. For more information, call 985.270.7526.

First Family

from page one

Pruitt from page 8

many people and traveling to so many different places throughout the world.

Pruitt was married for 60 years before her husband, Henry Albritt Jr., passed away in 2011. Pruitt also has two male children still living, another female child who passed away at the age of 41 in 1999, six grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

“As a younger person I probably thought I would like to do other things, but I realize the Lord already had something planned for me and I couldn’t do any better myself,” she said.

“The Lord had an opportunity of taking me home three different times but I had not served my purpose,” Pruitt continued. “I believe we all have a purpose and a purpose in Him, not just what we want it to be.

“When we serve His purpose for our lives, He will take us home.”

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. For “a,” you may stand for a “t” in this week’s issue of the ScriptureCrypto. Next week, “o” could stand for a “d.” Each week, every 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 rmu kuwspwr dx egphd vnpyy hu fw rmu sfovdr

dx spwa cudcyu pv p ouq xksd mu ydko, pv rmu

vndquy jcwv rmu tkpvw, nmr rtppkflm wrd xdk rmu

spw, wdk qpfrumn xdk rmu vdwv dx suw.

By CHERYL VAUGHN
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Clues:

S = M; U = E

Answer to July 16, Scripture Crypto:

First Peter four: ten

Judy July 30, 2015 • www.baptistmessage.com • LOUISIANA BAPTIST MESSAGE
‘Word and deed’ healthcare missions leading many to Christ

By Mark Kelly
IMB Communications

RICHMOND, Va. — All over the world, International Mission Board’s health care missionaries are living out “word and deed” Christian faith, and people are responding with decisions to follow Jesus — some of them in places where the good news of God’s love is only just now arriving.

During the Global Medical Alliance meeting June 1-5 near Richmond, Va., a steady stream of reports illustrated the wide variety of ways Southern Baptists merge proclamation of the gospel with demonstration of God’s love for suffering people:

■ In West Africa, as the Ebola epidemic exploded, IMB workers focused on raising awareness and teaching prevention techniques in Liberia, Togo and Mali. About 424,000 people were reached through a combination of fliers, TV spots, speakers, hand-washing stations, music concerts and food distributions. Thousands heard the good news and more than 200 professed faith in Christ.

■ In South Asia, a Vacation Bible School offering from First Baptist Church of Lafayette, purchased health and hygiene items that could be shared with terminally ill patients, along with health lessons and Bible stories. The distribution gave believers access to communities where they had been unwelcome before, and about 350 people accepted Christ — one of them on his deathbed.

■ In Europe, missionaries used fitness programs, addiction recovery ministries, health seminars and hands-on medical service in communities plagued by alcoholism, obesity, smoking addiction, suicide and mental illness. About 4,200 people heard the gospel, and 790 decided to trust Jesus — including members of an unreached people group.

■ In East Asia, health care strategies helped national believers conduct “word and deed” outreach in remote villages where the gospel was unknown. At the same time, health clinics in more than a dozen urban factories created opportunities for Western health care volunteers to partner with Asian counterparts. More than 1,000 people decided to follow Jesus — four of them among an unreached people group.

Authentic Christian faith helps suffering people in both body and soul, said Terry Las- siter, IMB’s lead strategist for reaching American peoples. Jesus and His disciples followed a “preach and heal” strategy that combined presenting truth with meeting physical needs, Lassiter told the group. In fact, about two-thirds of the encounters with Jesus and the apostles recorded in the New Testament involved both proclamation and demonstration, he said.

Followers of Jesus must resist the temptation to favor preaching over healing — or vice versa, Lassiter added.

He quoted one writer who said: “The Social Gospel is like a body without a soul — it’s a corpse. Proclamation without a concern for the social dimension is like a soul without a body — it’s a ghost. We are neither atheists nor Gnostics. Gnostics reject the body and embrace the soul; atheists reject the soul and embrace the body. We are Christians, and we embrace both.”

During the annual Global Medical Alliance gathering, IMB health care missionaries discuss new approaches to their work and strategize about using health care strategies to enhance work among people groups where the good news of God’s love is not known.

To learn more about GMA, email medicalmissions@imb.org.

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10 reasons why Pledge churches are all that (and a bag of chips!)

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Few will forget the final words of the document that sent shockwaves across the Atlantic. It was a message to a distant, controlling ruler and it began our nation’s quest for independence. The Declaration of Independence caps it’s radical message with these words, “We mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.” What an amazing moment that must have been as our forefathers took the quill in hand and ascribed their commitment that would seal their destiny and our blessing as Americans!

That’s commitment!
Our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor.

I’ve often wondered what would happen if every Louisiana Baptist church made a radical commitment to pledge everything they can to rescue those lost in sin by pledging our lives and our fortunes to the Great Commission. Hell wouldn’t have a chance.

Some might think that a pledge to give more to the Cooperative Program lacks the grandiosity of the pledge those men made in 1776. I don’t think so.

The Pledge is not just a pledge for a cherished piece of land or a sacrifice for an earthly kingdom. Our battle song rings out, “When we’ve been there ten-thousand years!”

Who will be there ten-thousand years? Will your next-door neighbor be there? Will the orphan in the heart of Shreveport be there? Will the university student who was born in an atheistic home be there? Will the village in Zimbabwe be there?

The Pledge is a pastor-led commitment to increase our giving so that everyone has the chance to hear and receive Christ’s offer of salvation and eternal life.

In the coming months you will be challenged to consider the following.

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- If you’re currently giving under 5%: We challenge you to move to 5% by 2020.
- If you currently give between 5-10%: We challenge you to move up 2% by 2020.

As my hair color indicates, I’ve probably got more years in the rear view mirror than I do on the horizon and the greatest desire of my heart is to see everyone trust a little more, give a little more and pray a little more.

The pledge to which our forefathers signed their names set the tone for our nation’s future for the last 200 plus years. I’m convinced if we take The Pledge, we will position ourselves to potentially see the greatest harvest our state has even known.

I’m in. Are you?

On behalf of all the lives you’ve touched thus far in 2015, thank you.

David E. Hankins

Figures Reflect 2015 Mid-Year Update

COOPERATIVE PROGRAM
www.LouisianaBaptists.org/CP
There are lots of fish in the sea!!! CP churches want to be their best, and The Pledge makes sure they get the very best training to go fishing for men... and women... and students... and children!
The Pledge is about taking the culture war seriously. Flip over to The Real Housewives of South Saratoga and you'll see what I'm talking about. (America's really losing it!)

Churches take up The Pledge because they know that working together is always the best strategy to reach people who don’t know Jesus. It’s eternally important and that’s why they give.

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