

"For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us ... "

- 1 Thessalonians 5:9,10

BAPTIST Message

Newsjournal for Louisiana Baptists



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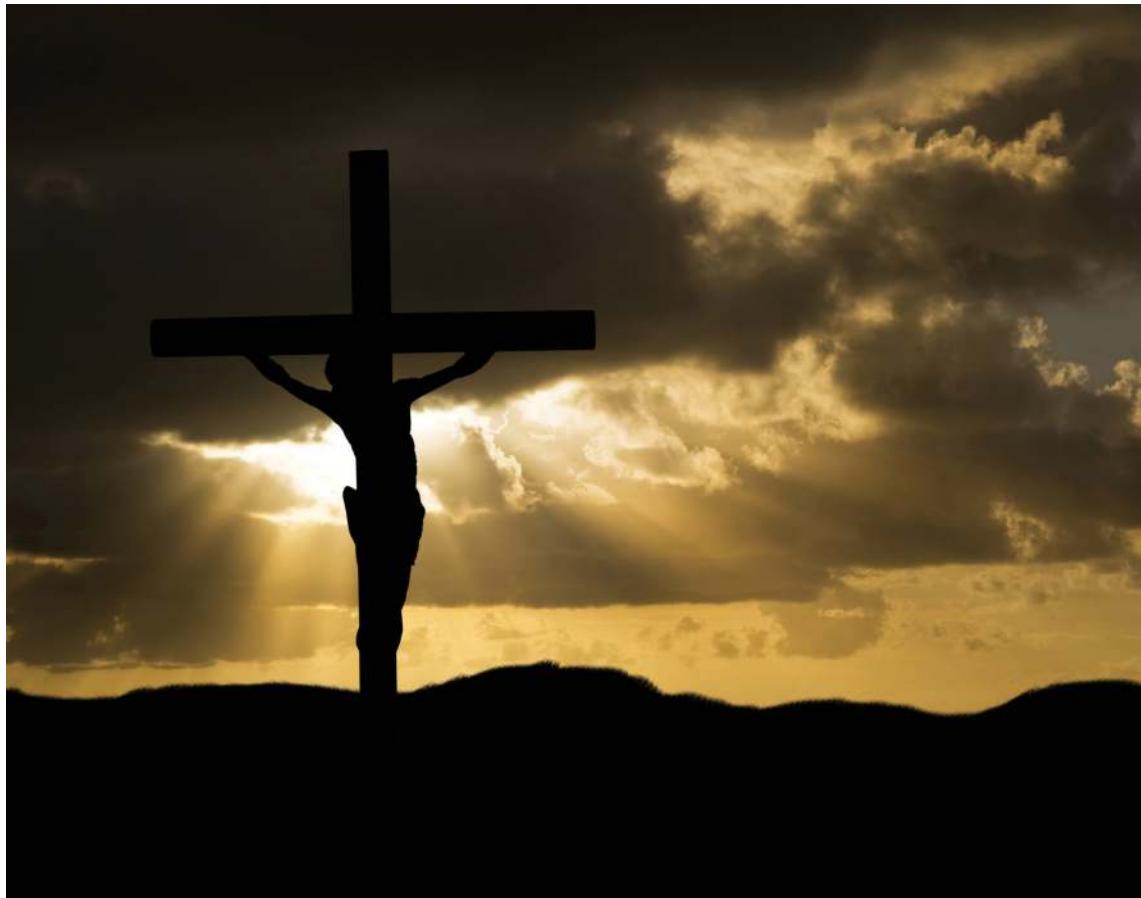
Volume 131 • Issue No. 6

www.baptistmessage.com

March 24, 2016

HE is RISEN

*He is not here: for he is risen, as he said.
Come, see the place where the Lord lay.
Matthew 28:6*



As we celebrate Easter this year, we should remember the resurrection of Jesus Christ provides each of us victory over death.

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Victory over Death

BY JAKE ROUDKOVSKI
NOBTS

NEW ORLEANS -- Someone has said, "Young may die, old must die, but all will die."

You don't have to be a statistical genius to know that one out of every one person on earth dies.

That's why as we celebrate Easter this year, we should remember that the resurrection of Jesus Christ provides each of us victory over death.

In our celebration of the risen Savior, we are celebrating our victory over death. In perhaps the most extensive chapter in the entire Bible on the resurrection of Jesus Christ and its impact upon humanity, the apostle Paul proclaims, "The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us victory through

our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 15:56-57).

In my study of the epic chapter on the resurrection of Jesus, I counted the word "death" appearing twenty-five times. In highlighting every mention of death in the chapter, I was reminded of my own mortality and a story that I read about two teenagers who were discussing death.

One commented, "Wouldn't it be neat to know the time and the place that you are going to die?" But the other responded with a bewildered look, "What good would it do?"

The first teen's response? "I wouldn't show up!"

Unfortunately, all of us have an appointment with death, something that is inevitable for us all "as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment" (Heb. 9:17).

In my tenure as pastor for the past twenty years and a seminary professor for the past eight years, I have been asked multiple times about the origin of death, and each time I am drawn to Paul's rhetorical question in 1 Cor. 15:55, based on the metaphor of a sting.

"O Death, where is your sting?" he asks.

See VICTORY on 9

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Easter changes everything

BY GEVAN SPINNEY

President of the LBC

Pastor, First Baptist Haughton

HAUGHTON – Has anyone ever taken something “from” you?

This is one of two important questions enmeshed in the Easter story.

WHAT WAS TAKEN?

Have you ever found yourself looking for something you cherished only to realize you are a victim of theft, left with an empty feeling in the pit of your stomach as a vivid reminder of being violated in your personal space?

All four Gospel writers introduce us to a man who is guilty of impacting individuals just this way.

Matthew described him as a “notorious criminal”; John simply called him a “robber”; Mark and Luke said he was incarcerated for murder.

But despite such descriptions and the obvious importance of the role Barabbas played in the passion story, the Gospels share little else about the man. As soon as he steps onto the pages of the Bible he steps off, and we never hear about him again.

It's possible to make some assumptions from his name – in particular that he came from a religious family.

Bar – meaning “son of”, and Abba – which translates as “father,” could suggest his parents loved God so much they named him “the son of the Father.”

But, perhaps his daddy was a Rabbi and his name was meant to convey “son of a father.”

Regardless, apparent proud parents named their baby “Barabbas” with obvious great hopes and optimistic

dreams he would follow the “Father.”

Instead, he became a taker, grabbing a chance for freedom that should have been Christ's.

WHAT WAS GIVEN?

The second key question to understanding Easter is “Has anyone ever taken something ‘for’ you?”

Have you ever found yourself guilty of something, and then watched as a friend or sibling stepped up to take some form of punishment in your place?

It is a rare thing, because we do not normally live so selflessly.

Moreover, if you have been the recipient of such a gift, it's likely you stumbled to come up with words to express your gratitude. Indeed words probably seemed inadequate to show your thankfulness to someone who cared enough to accept the pain that was due you.

This is the other side of the Easter story.

All four Gospels tell us Barabbas was guilty and Jesus was innocent; Barabbas was freed and Jesus was punished; that Barabbas received life while Jesus was put to death.

Above all, the Bible emphasizes Jesus not only died for Barabbas, but He died for you and for me. He took

our deserved death and gives us unmerited life and even abundance in living. He took our punishment and gives us freedom. The One who was innocent died in the place of all the guilty.

The Apostle Paul reminded the church in Corinth about this very thing, writing in 2 Corinthians 5:21, “God made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”

ONE MORE

In the end, the two questions “What was stolen?” and “What was given?” should lead you to ask one more: What must I do now?

In the end it's how you respond to this question that will make all the difference.

Easter changes everything – if you ask the right questions and seek the right answers, earnestly, with all your heart.



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Archaeology points to an empty tomb

BY GARY D. MYERS

NOBTS Communications

NEW ORLEANS – While the cross remains the undisputed symbol of Christianity; the empty tomb conveys the abundant life found in Christ.

FIRST PERSON Jesus stepping out of the tomb on the first Easter morning is simply overwhelming, representing His atoning death punctuated by the miracle of His resurrection.

As a believer, I have experienced the power of Jesus' cross and His empty tomb and I don't need to see the tomb to experience its power. But, as a student of the Bible and archaeology, I am compelled to learn as much as I can about the setting in which the Bible was written. So seeing the empty tomb in this context is an exciting thought.

Archaeology offers a wealth of contextual information about biblical places, events and people; however, it rarely offers proofs and such is the case with

Jesus' tomb.

Archaeology alone cannot lead to the tomb because it is not as simple as locating an empty tomb. Many empty tombs dot the landscape around Jerusalem – emptied by the ravages of time and human raiders.

With these limitations in mind, what can one learn from archaeology regarding the tomb of Jesus?

It turns out, quite a bit.

With a little help from early church writers, the difficulty of identifying the location of Jesus' tomb eases significantly.

ROCK-HEWN TOMB

First and foremost, archaeology confirms that the Bible gives an accurate, though not exhaustive, description of a first century tomb.

All four Gospel accounts describe a tomb cut from rock (Matthew 27:60, Mark 15:46, Luke 23:53, John 19:41) with a stone to cover the opening (Matthew 27:66, Mark 16:3, Luke 24:2, John 20:1).

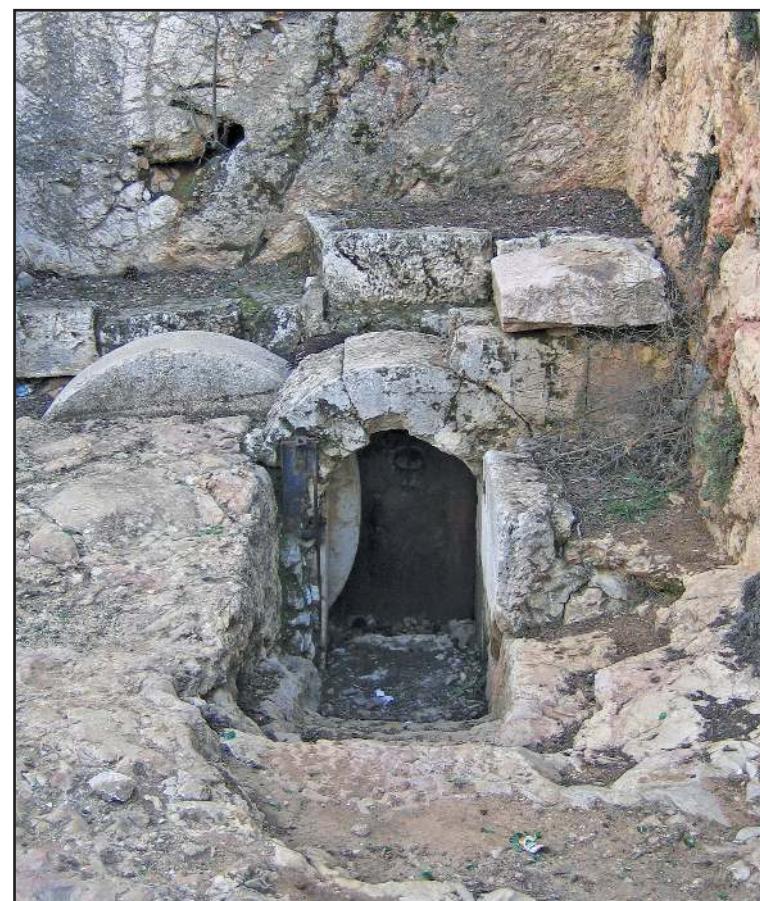
John implies the visitors to the tomb had to stoop down to enter (John 20:5, 11). Three of the Gospels make it clear the tomb was new and had not been used for other burials (Matthew 27:60, Luke 23:53, John 19:41). This is an important distinction because tombs often included multiple burials (family tombs), and throughout time tombs from previous periods were reused.

In Archaeology & the New Testament, archaeologist John McRay wrote that rock-cut, two-chambered tombs were typical for burials in first-century Jerusalem. The entrances of these tombs typically were low and blocked by a large stone, he said. Furthermore, while many first-century tombs in Jerusalem have square blocking stones, he observed, examples of tombs with round blocking stones have been discovered, too.

NOT IN THE CITY

Archaeology instructs us to look outside the walls of Jerusalem for the sites of Jesus' crucifixion and burial.

According to Jack Finegan, author of *The Archeology of the New Testament*, Jewish and Roman customs indicate that executions and burials took place beyond the city walls, again affirming the biblical account. John 19:17 notes "he went out to the place of the Skull," and verse 20 places the crucifixion "near the city." Likewise, Hebrews 13:12 records Jesus



Gary D. Myers photo

This first-century rock-cut tomb in Jerusalem, complete with a rolling stone, is located several blocks from the Old City. The low opening calls to mind John's account of visits to the tomb by Peter and Mary Magdalene (John 20:5, 11). Scripture states that Peter and Mary each "bent over" to look into the tomb.

"suffered outside the city gate."

CANDIDATE SITES

Over the years, the two leading sites for Jesus' burial and resurrection continue to be the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Garden Tomb.

Many believe the site is within the massive Church of the Holy Sepulchre, which covers the entire area thought to

be the place of Jesus' execution and burial. A smaller structure within, called the edicule (small house), actually contains the tomb.

While portions of this hill supposed to be Calvary are yet visible, nothing resembling a rock-cut tomb is still discernible as the surfaces are covered with marble and completely enclosed by something resembling a small orthodox church. Indeed, the ornate religiosity of the site makes it an uncomfortable place for evangelical Christians, but it has been venerated since the earliest days of Christendom.

The Garden Tomb fits better with the evangelical concept of the garden burial mentioned in John 19:41. The peaceful setting includes a rock-cut tomb a short distance from a cliff which bears a striking resemblance to a skull.

First suggested as the location of Jesus' burial in the 1870s, the simple, worshipful atmosphere with an easily accessible tomb makes the Garden Tomb a must-see stop for Christians visiting Jerusalem. Located outside the walls of the Old City, the Garden Tomb is a short walk from the Damascus Gate.

As a rock-cut tomb outside the city walls, the site fits the general parameters, but misses on an important one.

According to McRay, the Garden Tomb was carved some

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There is power in the resurrection

By FRED LUTER

*Former President of the SBC
Pastor, Franklin Avenue
Baptist Church, New Orleans*

NEW ORLEANS – Ever since I started as pastor at Franklin Avenue, the Easter season has been special to me and our congregation.

No matter what I'm preaching on, when the month of Easter arrives I will stop that series and concentrate on the events leading up to Good Friday and resurrection Sunday.

A lot of new Christians never hear all the details of the Easter

story, but I want all my members to know that one of Jesus' own disciples, Judas, betrayed him, and another, Peter, denied him.

I start with that Thursday prayer in the garden and give all the details leading up to the kangaroo court that tried Christ. I share the grim descriptions of His beating and narrate His walk while carrying that old rugged cross up Golgotha's hill. I give a vivid mental picture of Him being nailed to the cross – nails in his hand, nails in his feet – and the spear being thrust in his side, crown of thorns on his head.

Then I try to get them to imagine hearing those seven cries Jesus uttered from the cross before he died.

But, then I emphasize the hope of resurrection Sunday, Christ raised from the grave and an empty tomb.

I focus on this part of the Easter story, because it's this element that's so critical to our faith. The resurrection is so crucial to our lives as believers.

If Jesus had not died and shed his blood, we would still be in our sins.

I can't think about demonstration of Christ's love for us without also thinking of the old refrain, "There is a fountain filled with blood, drawn from Immanuel's veins and sinners plunged beneath that flood, lose all their guilty stains."

The resurrection is something every pastor in every church should take the time to emphasize.

The only hope we have living in this sin-sick world is in the power of the resurrection – that Jesus rose from the grave and one day is coming back again!



Franklin Avenue Baptist Church Pastor Fred Luter

La. Baptists urge flood victims to hold on, help is on the way

ALEXANDRIA – The enormous scope of the damage that flooding has inflicted on Louisianans has left many in the state shaken but yet resolved to overcome.

Still, people are going to need a lot of help in order to recover, according to disaster relief experts in the state.

Floodwaters have damaged more than 7,000 homes in Louisiana, affecting 28 parishes, but that number likely will rise because many of the state's biggest rivers have yet to crest.

Louisiana Baptists' disaster relief units, joined by Southern Baptist crews from 10 other states, already are fanning out to minister and help where they can, even as they wait for the waters to recede.

"Nobody fully understands how big this thing is yet and it is still going on," said John Hebert, director of missions and ministry for the Louisiana Baptist Convention.

"All of our state assets have been deployed and we are barely scratching the

surface. The magnitude of this flooding is just unbelievable as there are very few places in the state that have not been affected by it," Hebert said.

David Abernathy, Louisiana Baptists' northern region disaster relief coordinator, told Hebert, "We need all the help we can get. We're finding pockets of devastation everywhere. It's hard to wrap your hands around how widespread it is.

"In my 24 years in disaster relief, I have never seen the churches rise to the occasion like they have with this flooding event," Abernathy said. "They are ministering and working together like never before."

"We have assessors and chaplains out all over the state," said Hebert. "Please remember we are not first responders, we are recovery. Our hands are tied until the water finally starts to go down. It's then our work begins.

For more on this the story and for photos please go to www.baptistmessage.com.

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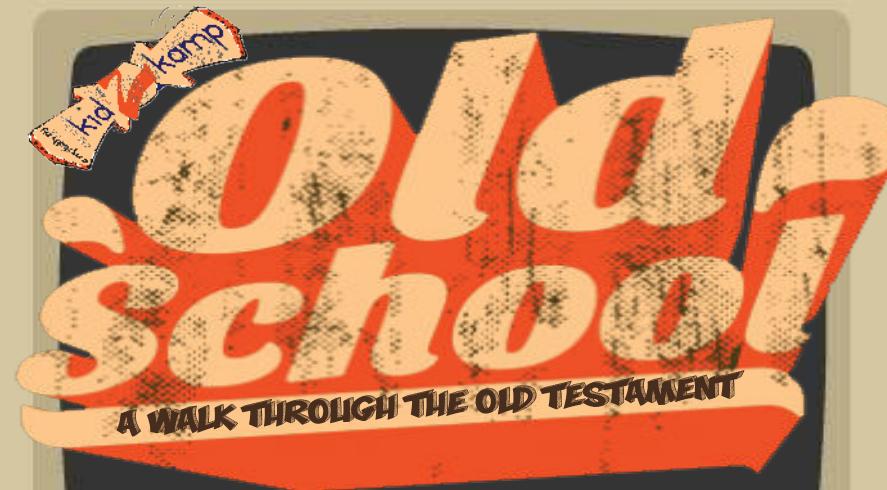
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There is Good News in the Holy Gospel!

BY WILL HALL

Message Editor

ALEXANDRIA – In many ways the Gospel message is a simple one.

Indeed, John 3:16 captures the hope and promise in a single verse: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

Regardless of what Bible translation you use, the meaning is clear. God has a plan for saving you and me for eternity.

BASICS OF BELIEF

There are a number of passages which explain what it means to “believe in Him.”

Romans 10:13 announces that “whosoever will call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved,” and Luke 18:13 demonstrates such a plea must be made in a spirit of repentance, recording how a tax collector, eyes down and beating his chest, cried out, “O God, have mercy on me a poor sinner!”

Other texts detail how re-

pentance, a change in life’s direction, begins with a heartfelt profession of Jesus as Lord of your life based on an authentic belief in His physical resurrection (Romans 10:9-10).

In 2 Chronicles 7:14, God reveals one must humble himself before seeking repentance.

The sequence of His instruction is clear ... before praying or seeking God’s face, and in order to be strengthened to turn from one’s wicked ways, one must first humble himself.

In fact, this Scripture sets the foundation for understanding that one must humble himself in order to be successful in any spiritual process.

For salvation, one must humble himself, for restoration of fellowship with Christ, one must humble himself. In order to revive broken relationships with a fellow believer, one or both parties must first humble themselves.

But the heart of the matter is the Bible says those who believe in Him – “receive Him” – receive the gift of salvation, explaining that “to them He gave the right to become

children of God, to those who believe in His name” (John 1:12).

RICHNESS OF THE MESSAGE

Although the Gospel message essentially is a simple one, there is rich texture to the Good News.

Virgin Birth. The virgin birth explains Christ’s divinity, and the joining of His divinity with our humanity adds depth to our understanding about His love for us. He left perfection to come live among our corruption. It also helps us understand the relationship He seeks with us – one of continuous fellowship. Christ was tempted in every way but did not sin for the simple fact of His very nature – He never separated His humanity from His divinity. It’s a message to us how we can overcome temptation. If we remain in Him, our humanity connected with His divinity, we can avail of His strength to overcome.

Sinless Life. His sinless life is proof of His unbroken union as fully man and fully God. But it also qualified Him

to die on behalf of each of us. John the Baptist declared in the wilderness, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29). No one else was unblemished and could serve as the sacrifice for the sins of all humanity.

Substitutionary Death.

The trial, torture and crucifixion of Jesus all begins with His taking the place of Barabbas, a criminal who robbed and killed others (John 18:40; Acts 3:14). But the truth is, Jesus took your place and mine on the cross. He did not pass on the cup of suffering given to Him, but followed His Father’s will that He should atone for our sins (Matthew 26:39). Keep in mind Christ said if we have hated in our hearts we have committed murder (Matthew 5:21-26) and if we lust for someone in our heart we are guilty of adultery (Matthew 5: 27-30). Indeed, it seems the only difference between hatred and murder, and, lust and adultery, is opportunity to commit the act.

Physical Resurrection.

Christ is risen! The truth of the biblical accounts is too overwhelming to believe less. He was physically raised from the dead, visited many witnesses, including 500 brethren at one time (1 Corinthians 15:1-8) and made multiple public appearances for 40 days straight, preaching the Kingdom of God (Acts 1:1-3). Moreover, He showed us the resurrection was not meant just for Him. Matthew 27:52-53 attests that “graves” were opened “and many bodies of saints who slept arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.” We can believe in His resurrection and know for certain we will be raised as

well – the empty grave is not an empty promise.

Imminent Return. Our conversion resulted in a new creation within us (2 Corinthians 5:10), but our resurrection will be to a new body – no more tears, no more sickness, no more concerns about whether we will live through tomorrow (Revelation 21:4) – and a new Heaven and new earth (2 Peter 3:7, 10). Christ promised he was preparing a place for us, a room in His Father’s mansion, and that he was coming back for us, Himself (John 14:2-3). Our reign with Him during the millennium and our eternal life in His presence will be something of wonder. The Bible says “eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man” the things He is preparing for us (2 Corinthians 2:9). But it hints at the splendor and the fulfillment we shall experience (Revelation 4:1-11; 21:10-23; 22:1-5). Jesus told His disciples He came to give life, and that it would be abundant (John 10:10). But nothing will compare with the learning, the worship, the sensations we will encounter when He comes to receive us again.

CELEBRATE THE GOOD NEWS

This Easter, celebrate the power and simplicity of the Good News.

Take time to remember how it changed you, and intentionally share this transforming message with someone else.

But also take time to enjoy the richness of the Gospel and reflect on the completeness of how God has provided for your life here, and for eternity.

He is risen, and for those who believe, He’s coming back for you and me!

The father and son team of **James** and **Timothy** Preuett of Montgomery, LA, presents a special performance of:

IMB baptisms hit their lowest level since 1969

By WILL HALL

Message Editor

ALEXANDRIA – Information submitted by the International Mission Board in response to a request by the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee indicates overseas baptisms for 2015 dropped to 54,762 from the 190,000 reported for 2014. Likewise, the number of new churches fell from 13,824 to 3,842 over the same one-year period.

The baptism figure represents the lowest level reported in 46 years.

A note explaining the declines states the decrease is “due to one large CPM no longer reported” (CPM refers to “church planting movement”). Since 2009, the IMB has changed data gathering procedures to “no longer include reports from partner conventions and unions,” but to report information about “work related to IMB personnel only,” according to annotations in the SBC Annual.

A table provided by IMB in item 22 of 25 replies to “Ministry Inquiries” shows an even larger four-year downturn. Baptisms fell by 211,689 since 2012 and the number of new churches declined 20,231 during the same time frame.

For perspective about the drop to 54,762 annual baptisms, according to data in SBC Annuals and

LC BCM sponsoring prayer walk March 23

PINEVILLE – Louisiana College has set aside March 23 as a special day of prayer.

From 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. that day, participants can take part in a self-guided prayer walk through seven reflective stations focusing on the passion week of Jesus, and prayer for the campus, community of Alexandria-Pineville, state and nation.

“Please feel free to come and spend a few moments remembering what Christ did for us and to continue to pray for our campus,” said Thomas Worsham, Director of LC’s Baptist Collegiate Ministry.

The LC Baptist Collegiate Ministry is sponsoring the prayer walk.



Pastors in Pointe à Pitre, Guadeloupe, baptize a new believer back in 2001. Baptisms by International Mission Board missionaries for 2015 dropped to 54,762 from 190 reported for 2014.

information posted on the IMB’s website, the 50,003 baptisms for 1969 were achieved with 2,371 missionaries deployed on the field while the baptisms tallied in 2015 were accomplished with 4,707 personnel under appointment.

Importantly, the information being reported for 2015 actually represents work that was done in 2014 during the transition of IMB leadership from Tom Elliff, who had led Southern Baptists’ largest evangelism entity since March 2011, to David Platt, who was elected in August 2014 to

replace Elliff.

Meanwhile, the numbers for work accomplished in 2015 and 2016 likely will be impacted by the turmoil generated by the terminations of a reported 1,132 personnel as part of a plan launched in August 2015 to reduce the total number of IMB personnel “by at least 600.”

The *Baptist Message* discovered the information about the fallen numbers of overseas baptisms and new churches while reviewing materials IMB supplied to the SBC Executive Committee’s request for infor-

mation.

In advance of its Feb. 22-23 meeting, the SBC Executive Committee sent a data call to all ten entities, including itself, which receive funding through the Cooperative Program. It also queried LifeWay Christian Resources and GuideStone Financial Resources, and, the Council of Seminary Presidents provided comparative data.

The information from all of these SBC entities was posted online and an email was dispatched Feb. 19 to an electronic mailing list with a link, www.sbc.net/cp/ministryreports, to the main web page.

During this same time frame, the IMB released a press report Feb. 24,

“Thanks to Southern Baptists, IMB in ‘much healthier financial position’, which included six paragraphs of general information about the organizational “reset” that has fundamentally reformed the structure of Southern Baptists’ missionary forces by targeting missionaries at least 50 years old with a minimum of 5 years of field experience and dropped the number of IMB people in the field to 3,817, the lowest total since 1993.

However, as of publication of this article, IMB has not yet issued any press release addressing the negative trend in baptisms and new churches discussed in the SBC Executive Committee materials.

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Archaeology

from page 4

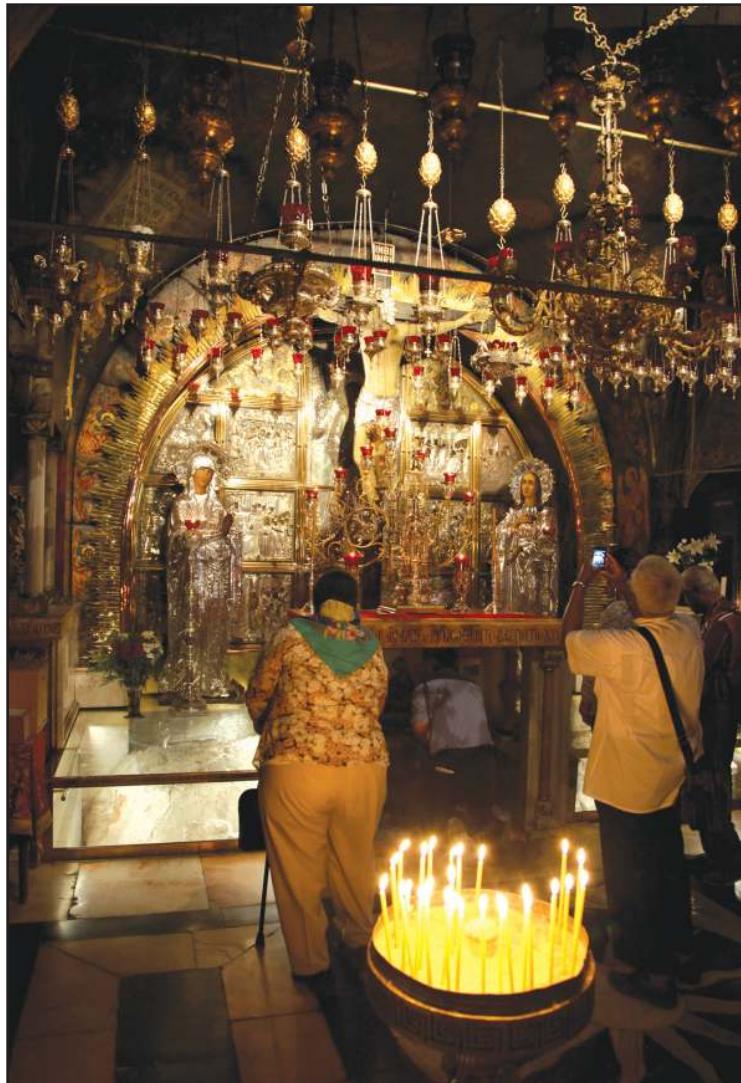
600 years before the time of Jesus and then reworked and reused during the Byzantine period. In fact, he points out there are no first-century tombs in the general area.

On the other hand, while the original surfaces of the tomb within the edicule of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre are not easily dated because of the marble modifications, other tombs located within the church, some very close to the edicule, date to the first century. Also, although now located inside the current wall, it is well documented that Herod Agrippa I rebuilt and enlarged the city's wall to encompass this area circa A.D. 44.

Other historical developments give further credence to this site.

According to early church writers Eusebius and Jerome, Roman Emperor Hadrian (c. A.D. 135) constructed a pagan temple on the site and installed statues of Jupiter and Venus. Romans commonly built temples to their gods on sites venerated by local, conquered populations. So, construction of a pagan temple here hints that early Christians were venerating the site as early as 100 years after the resurrection.

Later, Constantine (c. A.D. 325) cleared the ruins of the pagan temple, found the tomb and built the first church and edicule at the site.



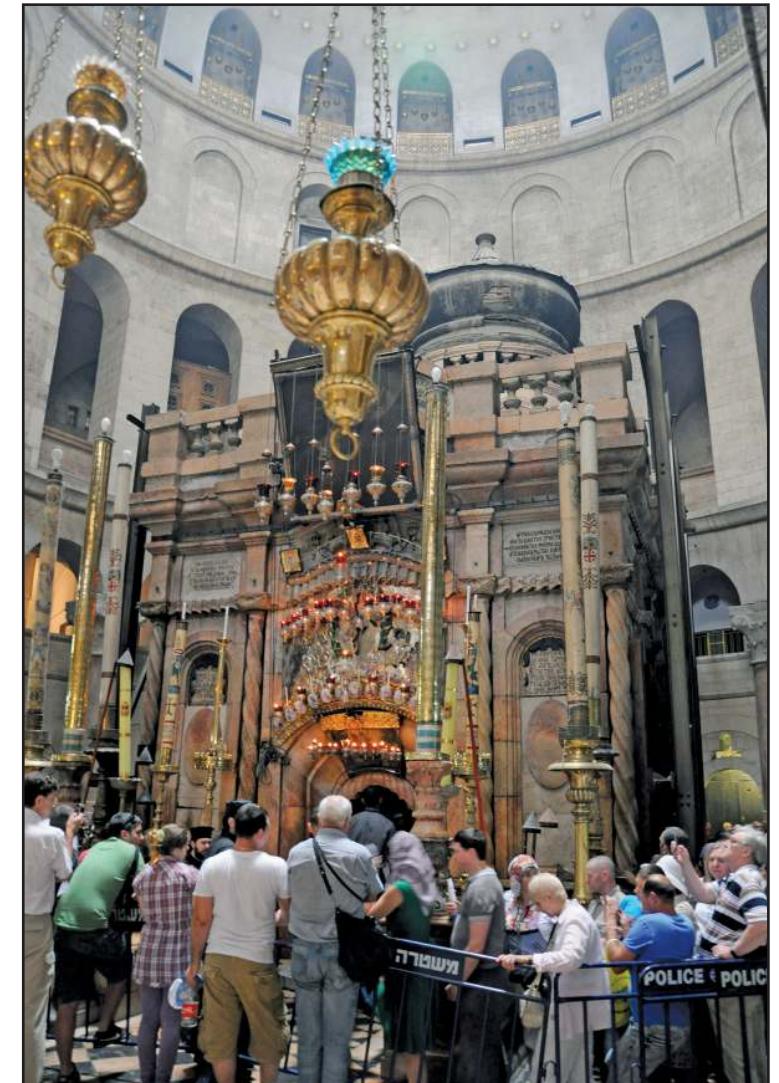
Visitors to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre look on as one pilgrim stoops down to touch the stone indentation the church tradition identifies as the socket where Jesus' cross was placed. Just left of the altar a portion of the presumed "Calvary" hill is visible.

was altered and adorned.

Later, more of the rock was cut away.

The current edicule built in 1809-10, is the fourth structure to cover the tomb.

Moreover, although the tomb's surfaces were marred by the addition of a marble layer, possibly to protect the rock from visitors, the layout of a two-chambered tomb is preserved,



Gary D. Myers photos

The edicule, a small structure inside the rotunda at Church of the Holy Sepulchre which resembles a Russian Orthodox church, covers the area thought to be the tomb of Jesus. The current edicule, built in 1809-10, is the fourth structure to cover the tomb. The first edicule was built in c. 325 by the Emperor Constantine.

and the back chamber includes a shelf or bench where Jesus' body would have lain.

There are many variables, but compelling evidence points to the site's validity and at the very least, Jesus was likely crucified and buried in the general vicinity of this long-venerated site.

WHEN IN JERUSALEM

Evangelical Christians visiting Jerusalem, should take time to view both sites. Though the Garden Tomb can be ruled out as the location of Jesus' burial, it does convey the idea of a rock-cut tomb and is a worshipful site well-worth seeing.

Also seek out some first-century tombs sealed with a rolling stone somewhere else in Jerusalem.

Then go to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and look past the layers of gold, marble and iconography, to visualize the site of the resurrection.

Take time to experience the place known as Calvary then read the resurrection passages to enhance what you've known before.

Gary D. Myers is the director of public relations at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and a Master of Arts (Biblical Archaeology) student at NOBTS. He has traveled extensively in Israel and has participated in archaeological excavations at Tel Gezer and Palmachim.

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Victory from page 2

He is making use of man's experience with the small sharp-pointed organ at the end of the abdomen of bees, wasps, ants, and scorpions, each capable of inflicting a painful or dangerous wound by injecting poison.

Why does death sting us all?

In the Garden of Eden, God asked Adam and Eve not to partake of the tree of knowledge of good and evil that was in the midst of the garden, warning them, "in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die," Gen. 2:17). The moment Adam and Eve disobeyed, sin and death entered the world inflicting a sting on all subsequent generations.

Jesus Christ, God's Son, the Second Person of the Triune God, is the one and only person who can provide victory over death, and, the good news of Easter is that God sent His son to die in our place.

In His crucifixion and resurrection, Jesus defeated death, and as one noted commentator pointed out, "In Christ's vic-

tory over death, death's sting is removed: it is declawed, defanged, and disarmed!"

When I was growing up, my family owned a bee farm. Along with my three siblings, I would spend every summer working there and I remember the very first time I was stung by a bee – I was 6 years old.

To my parents' dismay, we learned I was allergic to bee stings and my parents had to take me to an emergency room to get treatment.

After returning from the hospital, I recall distinctly the next time I saw a bee flying toward me. I began to panic, and my heart was filled with fear and anxiety. It may have been a little bee, but it looked like a giant monster!

At the moment I was about to pass out, my father placed his arm around me and showed me the stinger he had pulled from the bee I thought was a threat to me. Without my knowledge, my father was stung by that bee a few moments earlier.

He said, "Son, once a sting

is removed that bee can't hurt you anymore!"

That is what God in Christ Jesus has done for us! He took the sting of death upon Himself rendering death harmless.

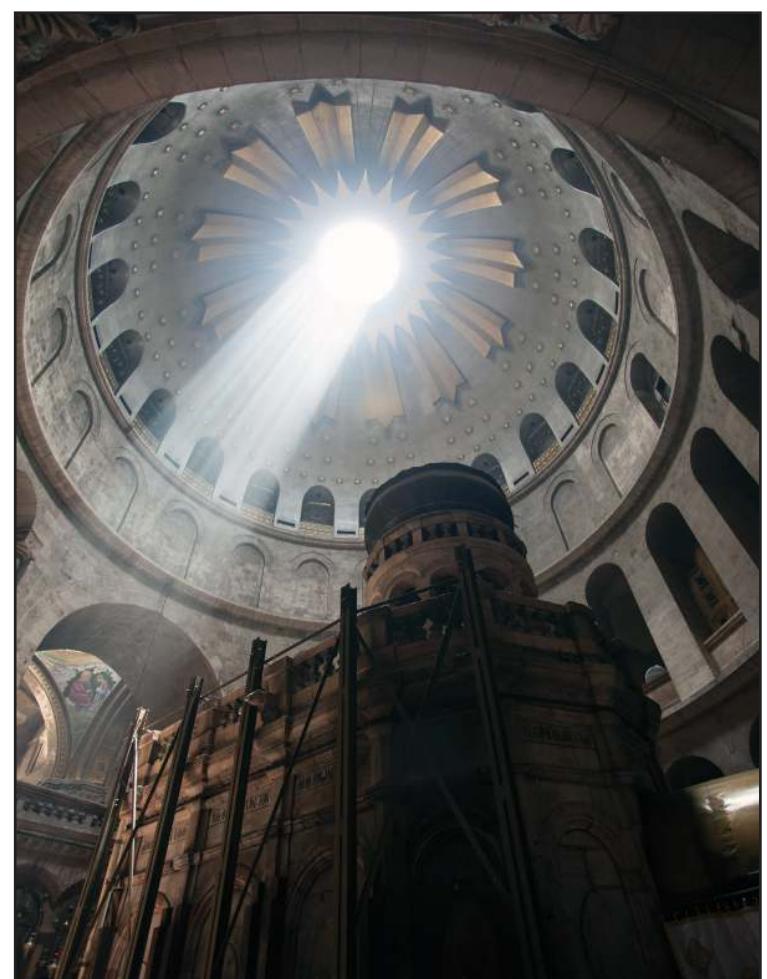
Still, although death may have been defeated and rendered harmless, it is not destroyed yet.

Praise be to God, though, one day death will be totally destroyed.

Paul shares that hope in 1 Cor. 15:26, declaring "the last enemy that will be destroyed is death" – a point in the future, as John said, when "there shall be no more death" (Rev. 21:4).

As we celebrate Easter this year, let us celebrate Christ's victory over death by expressing our gratitude to God who gives believers victory over death through our Lord Jesus Christ!

Dr. Jake Roudkovski is Associate Professor of Evangelism and Pastoral Leadership, occupying the Max and Bonnie Thornhill Chair of Evangelism, and Director of the Doctor of Ministry Program at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.



Gary D. Myers photo

Light spills through the rotunda of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem onto the edicule, which many believe covers the empty tomb of Jesus.



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John 3:24b

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Call **Advertising Director Rhonda Havens** at **318.449.4351** to place your ads.

YOUTH MINISTER

Oak Grove Baptist Church in Bentley, LA is seeking a youth minister.

Please email résumés to jtbrister@yahoo.com or mail résumés to Oak Grove Baptist Church, 194 Oak Grove Church Rd. Bentley, LA 71407

BI-VOCATIONAL PASTOR

Highland Hills Baptist Church in Texarkana, Ark. is seeking a bi-vocational pastor.

Email resume to: hhbc.search@gmail.com (preferred) or mail résumés to: Search Committee, HHBC, 4106 E 9th St • Texarkana, AR 71854

PASTOR NEEDED
Trinity Baptist Church in New Iberia, LA needs a full time pastor. He must be willing to live in area.
Please send résumé to:
Trinity Baptist Church
1100 Bank Avenue
P.O. Box 9829
New Iberia, LA 70562-9829
Attn: Pastor Search Committee

FULL-TIME CHILDREN'S MINISTER



First Baptist Pineville seeks a full-time Children's Minister. Please submit résumés to sholloway@fbcpineville.net

Seeking a full-time **MUSIC PASTOR**
Send résumés for a full-time MUSIC PASTOR to Eagle Heights Baptist Church 703 E. Walters Harrison, AR 72601 or email to ehbadmin@eagleheightsharrison.org

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New Prospect Baptist Church, Dry Prong
ATTN: Janice Meeker, Personnel Committee Chairman
111 Prospect Church Road I Dry Prong, LA 71423
Call 318.640.9712 or Fax: 318.640.9756
Email: npcsec@bellsouth.net

SEEKING A PASTOR

First Baptist Church of Delcambre, LA is seeking a pastor.

Please send résumés to:
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CPA Resume, 4501 Jackson Street Ext, Ste C Box 353, Alexandria, LA 71303

Bi-Vocational PASTOR

Harmony Baptist Church in Glenmora is seeking a bi-vocational pastor.

Please send résumés to: Harmony Baptist Church, Pastor Search Committee, P.O. Box 1056 • Glenmora, LA 71433 or email to richardh61143@gmail.com

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IN REMEMBRANCE

Bill Hines of Coushatta passed away March 3 at the age of 90. Memorial services were held at First Baptist Church of Coushatta with Lee Dickson and Billy Burkett officiating. Interment was at Springville Cemetery in Coushatta. He was a graduate of William Jewel University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Reared in a Christian home, he began his ministry in youth-led revivals at the age of 19 and actively served the Lord for over 70 years until his passing 9 days after his 90th birthday. He was a great minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ for over 70 years, with 38 of those years being served among the churches of the District Eight Baptist Convention. He was president of District Eight for four terms, and was still a faithful pastor at the time of his home-going. Preceding him in death were his parents and one brother, Bobby Hines. Left to cherish his memory are his wife, Jeanette; five children, Ginny Hines; Gene Hines and wife, Diane; Gerry Camp and husband, Richard; Joy Dowden and husband, Chris; Jennifer Moore and husband, Mark; and 10 grandchildren.

Ernest Julius [E.J.] Bradshaw of Leesville passed away March 6 at the age of 89. Services were held at East Leesville Baptist Church with his son David L. Bradshaw, Sr. and Jerry Key officiating. 'Bro. Brad,' as he was affectionately called, earned his B.A. degree from Northeast Louisiana University in Monroe in 1959. He attended Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary at Fort Worth, TX, and Eastern New Mexico University in Portales, NM. He was licensed and ordained to preach the Gospel at First Baptist Church of Sterlington in 1952. He pastored Enterprise Baptist Church in Farmerville, Bethel Baptist Church in Dubach, Paron Baptist Church in Sterlington from 1953-1958. He also pastored two churches in Texas and New Mexico before serving as Student Recruitment and Consultant for the Evangelistic Division of the mission board of the Southern Baptist Convention from 1985-1991. In 1992 he moved back to Louisiana and served as pastor and/or interim for Cooper Baptist Church in Leesville, Flactor Baptist Church in Hicks, Antioch Baptist Church in Slagle, and Pine Hill Baptist Church in Leesville. Since 2005 he served as the Director of Missions for the Vernon Baptist Association. He served on the Executive Board, including as President for the Louisiana Baptist Convention. In his lifetime he has preached over 70 revivals in Louisiana, Texas, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Illinois, Oregon, Washington, and Montana. He was preceded in death by his loving wife Bobbie Lee Bradshaw, and his granddaughter Teresa Hornburger. He is survived by his three sons: Ernest Julius Bradshaw, Jr., Alan Jerome Bradshaw and his wife Fran, and David Lee Bradshaw, Sr. and his wife Miriam; his brother, W.A. Bradshaw and his wife Shirley; and his brother-in-law Jerry R. Roberts and his wife Thelma; his grandchildren, David Bradshaw, Jr. and his wife Kristi, Keith Bradshaw and his wife Lorena, Candace Bradshaw, and Kimberly Thomass and her husband Nathan and his great grandchildren Ashland, Abigail, Noah, Eli, and Kian.

ON THE MOVE

■ **Josh, wife Melissa, Eubanks** is new as pastor at First Baptist Church, DeRidder.
 ■ **Ronnie, wife Kayla, Whitton** is new as music minister at Bethany Baptist Church, Bethany.
 ■ **Jeff and Jan Shadoin** are new as youth ministers at Bethany Baptist Church, Bethany.
 ■ **Greg Covington** is the new youth minister at Carroll Baptist Church, Walker.
 ■ **David (wife Pamela) Carlton** is the new Director of Missions for the Evangeline Baptist Association.

HOMECOMING

■ New Hope Baptist Church, DeQuincy: **Celebrating 70 years of Hope**, April 3, 10 a.m. Speaker: Jerry Chaddick, a former pastor. For more information, call 337.786.7520. Pastor: Roland Hebert.
 ■ Northwoods Baptist Church, Shreveport: **60th Anniversary**, April 3, 10:30 a.m. A potluck luncheon will be served directly after the service. All are invited. For more information, call the church office.
 ■ Emmanuel Baptist Church, Shreveport: **75th Anniversary Celebration**, April 17, 10:45 a.m. Former members and staff are invited to the service at 10:45 and the luncheon to follow. Please RSVP by calling (318) 686-7548 by April 10. Pastor: Chad Hardbarger.

REVIVAL

■ First Baptist Church, Lafayette: **Revival 2016**. March 23-26 and March 27. March 23, 6:30 p.m., **Brad Jurkovich**; March 24, 6:30 p.m., **Fred Luter**; March 25, 6:30 p.m., **Wayne Jenkins**; March 27, 9:45 a.m. and 11:11 a.m., **Steve Horn**. Music: **This Hope**. Join us for dinner on Wednesday and Thursday at 5 p.m. for \$6. Pastor: Steve Horn.
 ■ Camp Creek Baptist Church, Spearsville: **Easter Sunday**, March

27, 8 a.m. Evangelist: Joe Aulds.

- Lone Cherry Baptist Church, Mangham: **Revival**, March 30-April 3, Evangelist: **Joe Aulds**. Pastor: Doyle Adams.
- Northwoods Baptist Church, Shreveport: **Revival**, Sunday, 6 p.m. Monday-Wednesday, 6 p.m. Speaker: **Wayne DuBoise**.
- Colfax Baptist Church, Colfax: Revival, April 7-10. Evangelist: **Landon Longoria**. Pastor: Gary Howard.
- Ft. Jesup Baptist Church, Many: **Revival**, April 10-13; Sunday, 11 a.m. Monday-Wednesday, 6 p.m. Evangelist: **Michael Courtney**. Pastor: George Treutlein.
- First Baptist Church, Zwolle: **Revival**, April 10-13. **Baptist Men's Day** will begin the revival and Spencer Lovett will be speaking Monday through Wednesday. Evangelist: **Spencer Lovett**. Music: **Joe Jones**. Pastor: Jerry Penfield.

LAGNIAPPE

- First Baptist Church, DeRidder: **Farwell Fellowship in honor of Lindsey and Janet Burns'** retirement as senior pastor, April 3, 3-5 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall.
- **Steve Miller** is available for supply or interim pastorate. If interested, call 318.277.1616 or 318.446.5472.
- "Like new" **Kawai RX-1 baby grand piano for sale** for \$9,750. The piano is 5 feet, 5 inches with a polished ebony finish. This piano currently retails for \$20,800. It has hardly ever been played. If interested call Bruce Lingenfelter, 318.308.0567 or email lingenfelter3@suddenlink.net.
- First Baptist Church, Bonita: **Seeking a pastor**. Please send résumé to First Baptist Church, ATTN: Spencer Harrington, 15082 Reynolds Street, Bonita, LA 71223.
- Trinity Baptist Church, Natchitoches: **Community Candlelight Lord's Supper**, March 25, 6 p.m.; **Crimson Love: an Easter musical and drama**, March 27, 10:30 a.m. presented by the Sanctuary Choir and Easter Dramatists; I Saw Him, a dramatic Easter presentation by Parable (the youth performing arts team) April 3, 6 p.m.; **Children's Spring Musical**, presented by the children's choir and drama, April 10, 10:30 a.m. Pastor: Joshua Currie.
- Calvary Baptist Church, Natchitoches: **Drive-thru Easter Drama**, March 25, 7:45 p.m. – 10 p.m. It will be a reenactment of the betrayal, trial, crucifixion, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ. Calvary Baptist Church is located at 312 Hwy 3191, Natchitoches, LA 71457 for more information, please call us at 318.352.5017, Tuesday thru Thursday 9 a.m.-noon. Pastor: T.J. Boyd.
- Lanier Baptist Church, Baton Rouge: **The Life of Christ, an Easter musical production**, March 25-27; Friday & Saturday, March 25-26 6:30 p.m. and Sunday, March 27, 10:20 a.m. Pastor: Mike Ferguson.
- Celebration Church, Metairie: **Good Friday service with communion**, March 24, 6:30 p.m. (Celebrate Recovery), March 25, 6:30 p.m.; Spanish service (Iglesia Celebration, in the activity center), 6:30pm. **Easter services**, March 26, 6 p.m.; March 27, 8, 9:30 and 11 a.m. Sunday evening, 7 p.m. Kenner campus: **Good Friday services**, March 24, 7 p.m. and March 25, 7 p.m. **Easter services**, 8, 9:30 and 11 a.m.; Slidell campus: **Good Friday services**, March 25, 7 p.m. **Easter services**, March 27, 7, 9 and 10:30 a.m. St. Bernard campus: **Good Friday services**, March 25, 6 p.m.; **Easter services**, March 26, 5 p.m.; March 27, 8, 9:30 and 11 a.m.; River Parishes campus, **Good Friday services**, March 25, 7 p.m.; **Easter services**, March 27, 9 and 10:45 a.m.; West Bank campus, **Good Friday services**, March 25, 6:30 p.m.; **Easter Services**, 9 and 10:45 a.m.

- First Baptist Church, Winnsboro: **Parsonage Egg Hunt**, March 25, 10 a.m. Kids will hunt for Easter Eggs at the parsonage. Following the egg hunt will be a telling of the Easter story in the church sanctuary. Pastor: Craig Beeman.
- Woodland Park Baptist Church, Hammond: Good Friday Services, March 25, 7 p.m. Special music: Adult choir led by music minister Bryan McDonald. Pastor: Scott E. Thompson.
- First Baptist Church, Tioga: Family Easter Celebration, March 25, 10 a.m., and Good Friday Service, March 25, 6 p.m. The Cross of Christ, a wonderful Easter Celebration arranged by Cliff Duren and presented

by First Tioga Sanctuary Choir, March 27, 10 a.m. Pastor: Tim Hisaw.

- Bethel Baptist Church, Colfax: **Children's Easter Egg Hunt**, March 26, 10 a.m. at the Family Life Center. This is for all children thru the sixth grade. **Easter sunrise service**, March 27, 7 a.m., breakfast at 8 a.m., and Easter program, 9 a.m. Pastor: Carl Gulde.
- Simpson Baptist Church, Simpson: **Children's Easter Egg hunt**, March 26, 10 a.m. Pastor: Jeremy Blocker.
- Elwood Baptist Church, Forest Hill: **Easter Egg Hunt**, March 26, 1 p.m. **Sunrise services**, March 27, 7 a.m. followed by breakfast and Sunday school. For more information, call 318.305.3596. Pastor: Michael Evans.
- First Baptist Church, Minden: **Community Easter Egg Hunt**, March 26, 10 a.m. Pastor: Leland Crawford.
- First Baptist Church, DeRidder: **Eggstravaganza featuring 12,000 eggs filled with candy and toys and 100 special gold eggs**, March 26, 11 a.m.- 3 p.m. Free food and refreshments, Eggs-treme jumpers, activities, puppet show and clowns. Bring a bag or a basket for fun-filled day of activities. Pastor: Josh Eubanks.
- **Redeemer, River Oaks, Sherwood and Stevendale Baptist Churches in Baton Rouge** are partnering March 27 for an Easter Sunrise Service at BREC Forest Park, 7 a.m. Everyone is welcome. Bring lawn chairs.
- **Easter Sunrise Service**, Kentwood at Inspiration Park, March 27, 7 a.m. To honor Jesus, our Savior and all Disaster Relief Volunteers. Speaker: **Stan Statham**. For more information, call 985.229.8595.
- Cook Baptist Church, Ruston: **Easter sunrise service at Railroad Park**, March 27, 7 a.m. A church-wide breakfast will be served in the church gymnasium at 8 a.m.
- Calvary Baptist Church, Slidell: **Easter Cantata**, March 27, 11 a.m. Pastor: Arron McGuffee.
- Pine Grove Baptist Church, Ruby: **Easter Service**, March 27. **Lord's Supper**, 8 a.m., **fellowship breakfast**, 8:15 a.m., Sunday school, 9 a.m., **Worship – choir presentation of "Behold the Lamb."** Pastor: Ken Gilmore.
- Trinity Baptist Church, Eunice: **Easter Sunrise Service**, March 27, 7 a.m., breakfast, 7:30 a.m.; worship, 8:30 a.m. Pastor: Thomas McManus (interim).
- Philadelphia Baptist Church, Deville: **Easter Services**, March 27, 9 and 10:30 a.m. Pastor: Philip Robertson.
- First Baptist Church, Jonesboro: **Easter Morning Worship**, March 27, 8:30 a.m. Following the services, there will be a brunch in the Family Life Center. After the brunch, the children will have an **Easter Egg hunt at the church**. Pastor: Charles Wesley.
- Hillcrest Baptist Church, Franklinton: **Community Sunrise service at Mile Branch**, March 27, 6:30 p.m.; **traditional service** 8:30 a.m.; **contemporary service**, 10:45 a.m. Pastor: Andrew Voss.
- Hebron Baptist Church, Denham Springs: **Resurrection Sunday – Jesus the Risen King**, March 27, 10 a.m. Photo booths will be set up for family photos.
- First Baptist Church, Livingston: **Town of Livingston Community Sunrise Service in the park across the Town Hall**, March 27, 7 a.m. Everyone is invited to participate. Pastor: Brett Lester.
- First Baptist Church, Jonesville: **Sunrise service at Trinity Park**, March 27, 7 a.m. Speaker: Mike Deville. Music: Mike Davis. Breakfast will follow at FBCJ Gym. Pastor: Gary Norris.
- First Baptist Church, Albany: **Joint Easter Sunrise Service** for the area, March 27, 6 a.m. Pastor: Dan Munson.
- Longview Baptist Church, Deville: **Resurrection Sunday Services**, March 27, 8:30 & 10:30 a.m. Pastor: Robby Poole.
- **North Central Baptist Association hosting Easter Sunrise services at Jimmie Davis State Park**, Chatham, March 27, 7 a.m. Director of Missions: Marty Black.
- First Baptist Church, Bogalusa: **Easter Sunrise services**, March 27, 7 a.m. Easter worship services 10:30 a.m. Pastor: Greg Whaley.
- First Baptist Church, Many: **Celebrate the Risen Christ**, March 27, 11 a.m. This worship service will feature Easter music and the Lord's Supper. Pastor: Jonathan Bost.
- First Baptist Church, Vidalia: **Easter Services**, March 27, 10:30 a.m. Speaker: Charles Ramsey.
- Sale Street Baptist Church, Lake Charles: **Sunrise Service, Barbe Baseball Field**, March 27, 7 a.m.; **Easter Fellowship** at the Sale Street Fellowship Hall 10 a.m. Light refreshments will be served.
- First Baptist Church, Albany: **Easter Sunrise Service**, March 27, 6 a.m. Pastor: Dan Munson.
- Foster Road Baptist Church, Baton Rouge: **Easter Sunrise service**, March 27, 7 a.m.; Easter Service, 10:15 a.m. Pastor: Mike Morris.
- First Baptist Church, Pineville: **First@First Business Leader Luncheon**, April 4, Noon. Speaker: **Monroe Milton, president and co-founder of Manchac Technologies**. Cost: \$10 and you may pay at the door. Please RSVP to Melinda Langford (mlangford@fbcpineville.net). Pastor: Stewart Holloway.
- Sale Street Baptist Church, Lake Charles: **Matt Maher in concert with his 2016 Spring Tour**, April 7. Tickets are on sale at www.salestreet.org.
- Northeast Baptist School, Monroe: **Annual Golf Tournament**, April 8, Noon, registration/lunch, 1 p.m. shotgun start at Chenault Park, 4-man scramble, Cost: \$100. Registration forms available at the school, at Northeast Baptist Association center or online at www.nelba.net. For more information, call the school at 318.325.2077 or log on to www.mynbs.org.
- Fair Park Baptist Church, West Monroe: **Fourth annual Race-2Grace 5k, 10k and 1 mile fun run**, April 9, 8 a.m. Proceeds from this race will help FPBC Children Ministry send kids to attend Centri Kid Camp this summer. For more information, call 318.396.6306. Pastor: Waymond Warren.

By CHERYL VAUGHN
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Scripture Crypto

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

zpw gycmdw hd h dlq lauc ymd ljq ylpdu; jyldu

ylpdu hcu ju, mn ju ylso nhdw wyu glqnmouqgu hqo

wyu cuxlmqmqt ln wyu ylvu nmce pqwl wyu uqo.

yuzcujd wycuu:dmb

Clues:
Y = H; M = I

Answer to March 10 Scripture Crypto:
Numbers thirty-one:twenty-four

Cowgirl uses horse-trough plunge to symbolize her rebirth in Christ

BY JAMIE STEPHENS

Regional Reporter

WEST MONROE – As Mount Vernon Baptist Church Youth Pastor Bobby Blasingame lowered 15-year-old Rileigh Norred into a horse trough in front of the church, he believed the significance of her baptism was a very honorable, unique, and special experience.

"Over the years and at Mount Vernon I have baptized several people, but I have never had the special privilege of baptizing anyone in a horse trough," explained Blasingame. "Although it doesn't matter where a baptism takes place, it's always a humbling experience to be part of it."

Michelle Norred, Rileigh's mother, expressed appreciation for Mount Vernon Baptist Church Pastor Randy Burdeaux's receptive attitude about the special arrangements.

"When Rileigh told me that she wanted to be baptized in a horse trough, I thought we would have Bobby come to our

house," Michelle said. "It was great that Brother Randy was so open to the idea and accommodated her. Our horses are a part of our everyday lives and being able to use that to reveal Rileigh's decision to surrender her life to Christ was an extra blessing."

"I never knew what a horse trough even looked like until we began planning Rileigh's baptism," Blasingame said. "Many of us at the church were aware and concerned that the water in that trough would be freezing cold for Rileigh during her baptism, but Rileigh told everyone that she did not care. As I lowered her into the water, it was freezing cold against my hands."

Blasingame said the regular church service was dismissed that September Sunday and an estimated 300 members gathered outside to witness the special event.

"I have ridden horses since I was in my mother's womb," explained Rileigh. "I have grown up with them because my entire

family has always loved horses and enjoyed riding them."

Michelle said Rileigh always has considered herself something of a "true cowgirl."

According to Rileigh, she was baptized in her 24-year old horse Junior's trough which had been transported from the Norred home to the church.

Michelle said Junior was given to her daughter by a good friend of the family, JoeDee Dycus, and Rileigh added she has taken good care of her equine companion for many years now.

Rileigh's baptism followed a FUGE student summer camp she attended in Pensacola, Fla., where she asked God for forgiveness and committed her life to Christ. She said she felt the same spark the day she was baptized as the day she accepted Christ into her heart in July.

Blasingame said Rileigh has been actively engaged in daily discipleship training with her Sunday school teacher Charlie Kelley.

"Since I accepted Christ



15-year-old Rileigh Norred in a horse trough in front of Mount Vernon Baptist Church by youth pastor Bobby Blasingame recently.

into my heart and have been baptized, my plans are to finish school, go to work, and spread His Word to others," Rileigh told the *Baptist Message*.

Moreover, Blasingame praised both Rileigh's and Kelley's commitment to the process.

"This is a daily life we have to live. Being a disciple is

not something we just say and claim we are. After receiving Him into our hearts, I believe we should feel ecstatic," he emphasized, referencing 2 Corinthians 5:17.

"The best part about being a new creation in Christ is freedom," he said, "and Jesus also gives us the power to stand firm."



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