



THE BAPTIST MESSAGE

November 28, 2019
Volume 134 • Issue No. 23

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Philip Timothy photo

Steve Horn, during his first report at Louisiana Baptists executive director, urged messengers to unite for the sake of the Gospel and celebrated the work done by Louisiana Baptists for Kingdom purposes.

Horn: Celebrate & unite as the body of Christ

By Brian Blackwell
Message Staff Writer

ALEXANDRIA (LBM) – Steve Horn, during his first Louisiana Baptist Convention executive director’s report, called on messengers to unite for the sake of the Gospel.

“As I have travelled our beloved state, I have verified what I have long since believed,” Horn said during the Nov. 11 evening session of the LBC Annual Meeting. “We are different. We don’t all agree on every issue in Southern Baptist life. But, taking the picture that the Bible gives to us about the different parts of the body of Christ, we should celebrate our differences instead of complain about our differences.

“And in addition to a renewal of commitment to our Lord and to one another, we need a renewal of our commitment to our cooperative ministries,” he continued. “You are here at the convention

2019 ANNUAL MEETING

because you believe in that spirit of cooperation or at least are curious about what we could do in cooperation with one another. This is a great time to renew our commitments because so much is new.”

PROGRESS MADE

Horn said Louisiana Baptists have much to celebrate. Since the 2018 LBC Annual Meeting, five new Southern Baptist entity heads have come on board, in addition to the LBC approving its new executive director in May. Additionally, 17 new churches were seated for the first time during the 2019 LBC Annual Meeting.

Horn said Louisiana Baptists have made progress on many of the goals in the President’s 2020

See HORN, page 4

Louisiana Baptists prepare to restore faith community’s presence in Bahamas

By Brian Blackwell
Message Staff Writer

ALEXANDRIA (LBM) – Louisiana Baptists are preparing to execute a plan to rebuild the St. Matthew Baptist Church in the Grand Bahamas, which was essentially leveled by the 185 miles-per-hour winds of Hurricane Dorian Sept. 2.

The 128-year-old St. Matthew Baptist Church is one of nine of the 13 Baptist churches on the islands severely damaged or completely destroyed by the storm – and the

destruction crippled the faith community which enjoys a central role in Bahamian culture.

According to Gibbie McMillan, state director for Louisiana Baptist Disaster Relief, three mud-out teams will serve at separate times in Freeport, Grand Bahamas, between Dec. 8 and 21. Louisiana Baptists from churches and Baptist Collegiate Ministries in the state will work alongside teams from the Mississippi Baptist Convention in ‘Bahama

See BAHAMAS, page 7



Freddie Laing, pastor of St Matthews Baptist Church in Pelican Point, Bahamas, and his wife, thanked Louisiana Baptists for their commitment to partner with them to help rebuild their facilities that were heavily damaged by Hurricane Dorian during the annual meeting. The first Louisiana team is scheduled to arrive on site Dec. 15.

Philip Timothy photo

Couple heaven-bound after Gospel dial-up

By Brian Blackwell
Message Staff Writer

LEESVILLE (LBM) – For many years Gil James and his wife, Karen, believed they were Heaven bound based solely on their

good deeds.

But on a late July evening, during a phone call with Karen’s brother-in-law, Eric Jarell, the couple finally accepted that they could enter Heaven only through a relationship

with Christ.

Moments later, they prayed to receive Christ in their living room, and months later they publicly declared their faith

See COUPLE, page 15



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Skills of a church planter: Commitment to church growth

ALEXANDRIA (LBM)-- The Scripture has a lot to say about growth of the Kingdom, but perhaps the key passage is Matthew 13 which describes the four soils and the resulting harvest from each.

The same chapter also shares a parable that compares the Kingdom of Heaven to a mustard seed, "which indeed is the least of all the seeds; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches."

Both of these references strongly convey the idea that the Kingdom of God should grow, and should convict you that your church should grow. Leaders must be committed to developing key skills and gaining valuable experiences that help them grow their congregations.

LESSON LEARNED

A key principle about church growth is that it is a

function of health.

A healthy church will grow almost with little effort, and an unhealthy congregation will not grow no matter what you do.



JOHN HEBERT
Team Leader
Louisiana Baptist
Missions & Ministry

These concepts are real to me because of something that happened during my first year of marriage.

In fact it was less than a year after Kitty and I had recited our nuptials, and we were living in Lecompte, when I decided I would plant my first garden.

I went down to the Lecompte Hardware and told Mr. Robison I needed a tiller. He had just what I needed and after a few minutes I had my first piece of farm equipment and the seeds I would plant.

Farming was in my blood – my grandfather farmed, so did my uncles, and my dad, too – and I just knew that with all that heritage I could not fail, even if I had not farmed before. But, boy, was I wrong.

Everything was fine, until the bugs showed up.

Then the mustard greens and the beans failed, and I had watermelons vines, but not melons.

Worst of all though was the corn. It was so scraggly and pitiful -- stalks the size of a number 2 pencil – and to make matters worse, the corn was planted next to the road for all my farmer friends and family to see.

I'll never forget when my uncle ribbed me in town, "Hey, Johnny how's your corn doing?" I went home and pulled up every stalk, but never lived down the spectacle.

I learned a valuable lesson: There's more to growing a garden than just putting seeds in the ground.

There were things I needed to know and do to create healthy plants.

HEALTH & GROWTH

I once led a church through a period of strong growth before being told by one of the church leaders, "We don't need a 'big' church. We like our church to just stay small and provide a place for us to worship on Sundays."

Importantly, he did not realize that his attitude was a rejection of God's command to grow the church.

Paul wrote in Ephesians (4:11-12) "And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;"

See CHURCH PLANT, page 15

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Individual: \$14/year
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Fax: 318-445-8328
editor@baptistmessage.com
PO Box 311
Alexandria LA 71309
www.baptistmessage.com

(USPS 042-860) (ISSN 0740-2104)

Published biweekly Thursdays by the Louisiana Baptist Message, 1250 MacArthur Drive, Alexandria, Louisiana 71303.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Two weeks before change is desired, send new address (with zip code and street address) and mailing label from this copy of the *Louisiana Baptist Message*. Periodicals postage paid in Alexandria, Louisiana, and additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Baptist Message, 1250 MacArthur Drive, PO Box 311, Alexandria LA 71309-0311

Volume 134 November 28, 2019 Number 23

Speakers press messengers to unite for the Gospel

By Brian Blackwell
Message Staff Writer

ALEXANDRIA (LBM) – Wait on God and He will deliver in His timing, Eddie Wren said during his Louisiana Baptist Convention president’s address Nov. 11.



Eddie Wren

Referencing Isaiah 40:27-31, Wren, pastor of the First Baptist Church in Rayville, exhorted Louisiana Baptists to “wait on the Lord. Keep following Him and wait on Him.”

“Though the world tells us the church is falling apart, and the world tells us the church is antiquated, though the world tells us we need something else, we must not be shaken,” Wren told messengers. “The rebellious time we live in is no time to compromise. Never believe God doesn’t know where we are. Never listen to the lies of the devil as he tells us God cannot help us.”

“Though we may be experiencing some difficulties, it’s not the end,” he proclaimed. “Don’t give up; don’t give in. Wait on the Lord and in due time He will renew your strength, He will lift you up and He

will change your situation. And you will be renewed. You’ll leave the rubble and despair behind and by God’s grace you’ll soar.”

JAKE ROUDVOSKI

During two Bible study sessions, Jake Roudvoski, professor of evangelism and church leadership with New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, offered his observation “that the greatest need in the evangelical world and our own convention is for us to experience the renewal of the holiness of God.”

“When we recapture the vision of the holy God who is sovereign, then it would lead us to trust Him not matter what happens in our



Jake Roudvoski

lives,” he said.

Drawing from Isaiah 6:1-8, Roudvoski said one of the main reasons why Southern Baptists are struggling to share the Gospel consistently is because they do not view God as Holy.

“If you see God as holy, you would want to serve Him faithfully and share Him consistently with others,” he said.

In his second mes-

sage based on Revelation 2:1-7, Roudkovski said Louisiana Baptists need to repent and be revived.

“For many of us, our love for Jesus Christ has become stale and not as passionate as it once was,” he said. “We need to receive this relevant complaint from Jesus

See **SPEAKERS**, page 14

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CORRECTION: As previously noted by Louisiana College in the *Baptist Message*, the minimum ACT score for the President's Leadership Award was incorrectly cited as 23. The correct minimum score to qualify for the award is an ACT score of 24.

Horn from page one

Commission Report, an initiative that seeks to reach every generation and every people group in Louisiana with the Gospel by the end of next year through the avenues of congregational revitalization, church planting, communications and collaboration.

The 2020 recommendations were crafted collaboratively by a commission of 400 Louisiana Baptist leaders, staff members and laypeople, working in

20 subcommittees of 20 members each. Ten “key actions in reaching our state” – known as KAIROS – were developed to engage two audiences – the next generation and every people group.

Since 2010, 255 churches have been planted in the state, 45 short of the goal of 300 by 2020/2021. Of those, 143 are non-Anglo congregations.

Non-Anglos have served in positions of leadership, including Leroy Fountain,

church health strategist for New Orleans Baptist Association, capturing re-election as first vice president of the LBC, and three out of the four sub-committee chairs of the LBC Executive Committee held by non-Anglos.

Horn also cited progress in the areas of compassion ministries (an estimated 65 to 70 percent of the more than 1,600 LBC congregations are involved in some type of compassion ministry) and Operation Highways and Hedges, a multi-year, multi-platform media strategy addresses our desire to be more engaged in communicating the Gospel with every person in Louisiana (600 people viewed a Here For You Gospel presentation in June, and 124 of those made a decision to trust Christ).

PROGRESS TO GO

While Louisiana Bap-



Brian Blackwell photo

Louisiana Baptists Executive Director Steve Horn and Louisiana Baptist Convention President Eddie Wren encouraged messengers in separate Annual Meeting messages.

tists have celebrated much progress in the 2020 Commission goals, Horn said one area that has not seen growth is Cooperative Program giving, Southern Baptists’ primary channel for funding missions causes. He asked Louisiana Baptists that have not given as much lately to consider joining with the other churches in the convention and give to the CP so more can be accomplished to advance the Gospel.

“Whether justified or not, whether God’s will or not, whether principled decision or not, some in Louisiana Baptist life have taken their ball and gone home,” Horn said. “Hear my heart on the matter. The decision of cooperation belongs to our churches. This is the way it should be and will always be. However, some of our decisions have resulted in unintended consequences.

“Our partners are hurting,” he said. “We need you back. Our partners need you back. Our missionaries need you back. Our college needs you back. Our Seminaries need you back. Disaster Relief needs you back. BCM needs you back. Our ability to deliver the best training events requires that you come back. We need each other.”

COOPERATION APPRECIATED

Horn expressed appreciation for additional cooperation among Louisiana Baptists.

He welcomed to the stage Freddie Laing, pastor of the 128-year-old New St. Matthews Baptist

Church, one of nine of the 13 Southern Baptist churches in the Bahamas that were either damaged or destroyed in the aftermath of Hurricane Dorian.

Louisiana, Mississippi, Southern Baptist Disaster Relief, the International Mission Board and Baptist Global Response have partnered to rebuild the facility through a project called ‘Bahama Rebuild.’

The first team is expected to work on the island around Dec. 15.

Laing said he praises God for the blessings provided in the midst of the destruction.

“I am continually praising the Lord you will be with us for the rebuilding of our church,” Laing said. “Thank you for committing to help us in this most difficult time.”

Horn also welcomed Jonathan Howe, vice president of communications for the SBC Executive Committee. Howe shared the Executive Committee has developed five key ways to reach others for Christ: live and breathe Gospel urgency; empower all churches, generations, languages and ethnicities in the SBC; tell and celebrate what God is doing; love others like Jesus does; and prioritize, elevate and accelerate CP giving.

“We are here to serve Southern Baptists,” Howe said. “We are committed to helping Southern Baptists reach every person with the Gospel of Jesus Christ in every town, every city, every state and every nation across the world.”

See HORN, page 7

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WRAPUP: Resolutions, motions, budget and elections

By **Brian Blackwell**
 Message Staff Writer

ALEXANDRIA (LBM) – Louisiana Baptists enjoyed fellowship and worship during the LBC Annual meeting, but also conducted important business, passing resolutions, addressing motions, approving a budget and electing leaders.

RESOLUTIONS

Messengers approved four consensus statements, with three offering respectively: a statement of appreciation to the Randolph Riverfront Center in Alexandria for hosting the annual meeting and to individuals who contributed in important ways to the production of the two-day event; a declaration that being transformed from sinner to believer means our “old selves have passed away” as well as our old identity with those sins; and, a call for Louisiana lawmakers “to provide legal relief for churches to allow them the freedom to share information reasonably believed to be a true allegation about an individual to prospective employers or other congregations

– as a means to prevent predators from continuing to harm others.”

But the fourth stated Louisiana Baptists’ support for the proposed “Love Life Amendment,” slated to be on the statewide ballot in 2020.

The resolution gives “our strongest possible endorsement of the Love Life Amendment and the constitutional protection it affords against unilateral actions to undo pro-life laws’ and urges “all eligible Louisiana Baptists to register and to vote for the Love Life Amendment and to encourage others to do likewise in order to overwhelmingly pass this 2020 ballot measure.”

The actual language of the proposed constitutional amendment reads “To protect human life, nothing in this constitution shall be construed to secure or protect a right to abortion or require the funding of abortion.”

The amendment would aim to prevent action that has taken place in 13 other states, where an activist judge on their highest courts found an inherent right to abortion in their respective constitutions.

The Louisiana Baptist



Brian Blackwell photo

John Fream, pastor of Cypress Baptist Church, encouraged messengers during the Committee on Moral and Social Concerns Report to encourage others to vote for the ‘Love Life’ amendment in 2020.

Office of Public Policy is organizing a campaign to be coordinated with Associational Mission Strategists to help pastors inform their congregations about the issues and to energize members

about the vote this fall.

BUDGET APPROVED

Messengers approved the Cooperative Program budget.

The 2020 financial plan

is based on expected contributions of \$18,653,700, a year-to-year decrease of \$160,118, following three previous consecutive years of annual decreases of at least \$535,000 (\$693,587 in 2019, \$535,426 in 2018 and \$550,435 in 2017). Cooperative Program projections are based on actual receipts from August 2018 through July 2019.

The allocation formula for distributing Cooperative Program gifts remains unchanged with 63.26 percent dedicated to support ministries in the state and 36.74 percent forwarded to fund national entities.

MOTIONS

Lloyd Whitman, a messenger from First Baptist Church in Dry Prong, submitted a motion asking Louisiana Baptists to explore ways of promoting

See **MOTIONS**, page 6

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Motions from page 5

and facilitating ministries to criminal offenders and their family members. The motion was referred to the LBC Executive Board.

Checkerz Williams, a messenger from Celebration Church in New Orleans and the church planter for the Renew Church in Baton Rouge, submitted a motion asking the LBC to allow members of church plants to register as messengers. The motion also was referred to the LBC Executive Board.

Messengers also learned about the progress made on a motion submitted during the 2018 LBC Annual Meeting by Myrt Hales, a messenger from the First Baptist Church in Rayville.

That motion, referred to the LBC Executive Board, had asked the LBC to form a committee to “explore establishing a Christian-based addiction recovery center to aid people with chemical dependencies to

overcome and be redeemed into freedom from the chains of addiction and to experience the love and redemption found in Christ.”

LBC Executive Board President Waylon Bailey told messengers a task force has been formed and held its first meeting Oct. 17, with an additional meeting scheduled Dec. 5. Task force members include: Harry O. Brown, pastor, First Baptist Church, Ringgold; Willis Easley, pastor, Christ Community Church in Denham Springs; Jeffrey Friend, pastor, Suburban Baptist Church in New Orleans; Tim Hisaw, pastor, Tioga First Baptist Church; Daniel Holsomback, pastor, First Baptist Church in Pine Prairie; Michael Linton, pastor, First Baptist Church in Sulphur; and LaDelle Sandifer, laymen, First Baptist Church in Jonesville. Assisting the task force is Judge Terry Hoychick, music minister,



Brian Blackwell photos

(left to right) Lloyd Whitman, a messenger from First Baptist Church in Dry Prong, submitted a motion for the LBC or an existing committee to explore ways of promoting and facilitating churches to minister to offenders, their family members and inmates who have been released. The motion was referred to the Executive Board for further deliberation. Church planter Checkerz Williams, a messenger from Celebration Church in the New Orleans area, presented a motion that the Louisiana Baptist Convention adopt the same messenger requirements as the Southern Baptist Convention. Currently, church plants must register as messengers through the sponsoring church, which allows them voting privileges. Williams is pastor of Renew Church in Baton Rouge.

First Baptist Church in Basile; Jeff Cook, compassion ministries strategist for Louisiana Baptists, and Steve Horn, executive director for Louisiana Baptists.

OFFICERS ELECTED

Messengers elected David Cranford, pastor of the First Baptist Church in Ponchatoula as president. He defeated Jeff Ginn, pas-

tor of the Istrouma Baptist Church in Baton Rouge, 215-172. Leroy Fountain, church health strategist for the New Orleans Baptist

See **MOTIONS**, page 7

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Bahamas

from page one

Rebuild,' a joint partnership with the International Mission Board and Baptist Global Response.

The North Carolina and Alabama state conventions are sending additional teams to undertake other rebuild projects on the islands.

"Having served as a state disaster relief director for 14 years, this particular response will be, by far, as difficult as Hurricane Katrina was," McMillan told the Baptist Message. "The conditions are not real inviting due to the fact there is no electricity and very little water.

"Come most of all with a servant's heart to serve whenever, wherever and however," he added. "This deployment will be difficult because of the damage, yet souls are in the balance and need to know God cares. After we show them God cares by our going, then we will be able to shine the light of the glorious Gospel to them."

The initial teams already are formed to work through the end of 2019.

However, McMillan is looking for 10-25 volun-

See **BAHAMAS**, page 15

Horn

from page 4

SEEK RENEWAL

As Louisiana Baptists look to the future, Horn encouraged them to entreat God for favor and unity, encourage all that builds favor and unity, and eliminate all that threatens favor and unity.

He said if they are to accomplish those goals, Louisiana Baptists must not allow their diversity to divide and distract them from their primary mission. Such an effort also will require uniformity to cooperate for their primary mission.

"Come with me and beg God for His favor and for the unity of the people," Horn said. "Can you see it? Our success is not ultimately tied to our strength, our skill, our intellect, our personality, and certainly not our resources. In fact, God says that our victory will not be based on any of that, but on Him."



Brian Blackwell photo

Newly elected Louisiana Baptist Convention officers are from left Marc Taylor, second vice president, Leroy Fountain, first vice president, and David Cranford, president. Taylor is a layman at Cook Baptist Church, Ruston; Fountain is church health strategist for New Orleans Baptist Association; and Cranford is pastor of First Baptist Church, Ponchatoula.

Motions

from page 6

Association, was re-elected first vice president, and Marc Taylor, a layman from the Cook Baptist Church in Ruston, was elected second vice president.

Fountain and Taylor were elected by acclamation.

LAGNIAPPE

The final messenger count for the 2019 Annual Meeting was 583, an increase from 535 who registered during the 2018 Annual Meeting at the Temple Baptist Church in Ruston.

The 2020 Annual Meeting is scheduled for Nov. 9-10 at the Franklin Avenue Baptist Church in New Orleans.

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8 ANNUAL MEETING



Cameron Weatherford, worship leader for the Annual Meeting, leads messengers in a time of praise. Weatherford is a member of Calvary Baptist Church in Alexandria and chairman of the Louisiana College Division of Fine Arts.



Louisiana Baptists Executive Director Steve Horn congratulated Bill Robertson on his retirement as director of pastoral leadership for Louisiana Baptists. Robertson will retire Nov. 30 and will continue to serve as pastor of Fellowship Baptist Church in Jena. Standing beside Robertson is his wife, Linda.



A Louisiana College student lifts her hands in praise during the opening session of the Annual Meeting.



Ben Clapper, executive director of Louisiana Right to Life, thanked Louisiana Baptists during the Pro-Life Breakfast for their support in the pro-life movement in the state and urged everyone to get out the vote for the 'Love Life' amendment in 2020.



An attendee to the 2019 annual Pastors Conference raises her hands in worship at the opening of the event, which took place First Baptist Church, Pineville on November 10 and 11.



Two Louisiana Baptist state legislators were honored for their courageous efforts during the Louisiana Baptist Convention Annual Meeting by Dr. Will Hall of the Louisiana Baptists Office of Public Policy. (Left to right) State Sen. Beth Mizell, a member of First Baptist Church in Franklinton, was given the Esther's Courage Award, and state Sen. Gerald Long, a member of First Baptist Church in Natchitoches, received the Shammah's Courage Award.



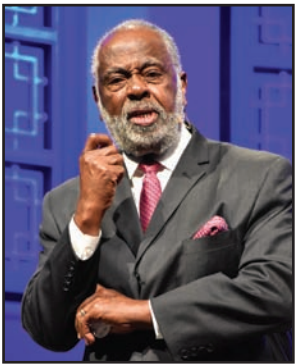
Jarrod and Jennifer Hawthorne share, during the Louisiana Baptist Children's Home and Family Ministries report, about their passion for adoption and foster care. They are one of many families who are families who are part of the Children's Home Connect 1:27 foster care and adoption network. For information on how you can participate in this ministry, visit www.lbch.org/foster-adoption.php/index.html.



Katie Bolen, a member of Cypress Baptist Church in Benton, and a freshman at LSU in Baton Rouge, shares how the Baptist Collegiate Ministry has helped her grow in her faith on campus.



Louisiana College recognized excellence in the pastorate within groupings of worship attendance up to 125, 126 to 500 and more than 500. From left: Gonzalo Rodriguez, Good Shepherd Hispanic Baptist Church in Metairie; LC President Rick Brewer; and Luther Sanson, pastor of Twin Oaks Baptist Church and Bastrop. Not photographed is Fred Luter, Franklin Avenue Baptist Church, New Orleans.



Robert Smith



Paul Chitwood



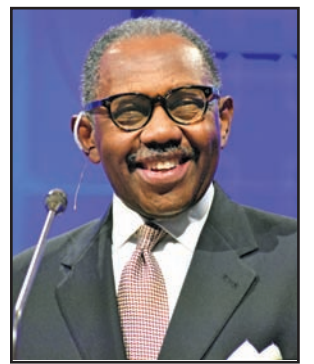
Steve Horn



Dennis Watson



Ben Trueblood



Leroy Fountain

Pastors Conference offered renewal for the work

By Brian Blackwell
Message Staff Writer

PINEVILLE, La. (LBM) – During the 2019 Louisiana Baptist Pastor’s Conference, Nov. 10-11, at the First Baptist Church, Pineville, speakers offered words of encouragement and conviction to pastors.

ROBERT SMITH

Robert Smith, professor of Christian preaching at Beeson Divinity School in Birmingham, Alabama, spoke during the opening session from Joshua 14:6-15 to urge the crowd to resist a “me first” attitude and instead to embrace God’s calling “to be second.”

Pointing to the faithfulness of Caleb, who waited 45 years for God to fulfill his promise of a new land, Smith said Caleb saw his patient obedience rewarded.

“God’s delays are not God’s denials,” he said. “It’s been 45 years. How do you live with a dream, a vision for 45 years? It has been delayed. But God is not in time. Time is in God. If you will trust Him and be faithful, it may be a delay, but it’s not a denial.”

PAUL CHITWOOD

Paul Chitwood, who was elected president of the Southern Baptist International Mission Board in November 2018, told pastors to adopt the wisdom that Nehemiah displayed when he fought off the enemy who was trying to dissuade him from rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem.

“The enemy’s goal is to stop the great work,” Chitwood said, referring to Nehemiah 6. “And he will do whatever he can to stop you if you are part of the

great work.”

“Great work will always meet great opposition. Great things are forged in the fire,” he offered. “And if you are feeling it is getting a little hot where you are, don’t be discouraged. You are doing a great work.”

Chitwood also challenged Louisiana Baptists that “there are still some tribes, some languages, some nations and some peoples who have yet to hear the Gospel... and so we’ve still got work to do.”

STEVE HORN

Louisiana Baptist Executive Director Steve Horn opened the second day of the Pastors Conference by drawing from Colossians 1:24-29 to exhort pastors to

be faithful even in suffering.

“In the worst of times he had a ministry,” Horn said about the Apostle Paul. “He had a calling upon his life. He had a mission. Even in prison, he stayed focused on that ministry. In prison he couldn’t do anything in ministry but write, but write he did because that is what God had called him to do. He did this because he knew there was a God in Heaven who held all things together.”

“Some of us come to meetings like this and say ‘That guy over there, he has it all together but I don’t have it all together.’ They don’t have it all together either,” he offered. “Not everybody that they’ve baptized has been

made complete in Christ. They still have work to do. May you be encouraged to just keep going.”

DENNIS WATSON

Dennis Watson, pastor of the Celebration Church which has campuses in New Orleans, Baton Rouge and the Northshore, cited Genesis 39 to caution pastors that when they have big dreams, trials and obstacles surely will follow.

“Joseph had a great vision for his life,” Watson said. “It’s the vision that keeps us following the Lord. Our hopes and dreams keep us determined during difficult times. What are your God-given dreams for the future? Don’t let go of them.”

Watson also reminded pastors to guard against the sins of pity, pride and pleasure by “preparing for them, having the right perspective of them and depending on God’s power to overcome them.”

“Satan knows where we are vulnerable in our lives. In those times we have to turn to the Lord and avail ourselves to the power of the Lord.”

BEN TRUEBLOOD

Ben Trueblood used Hebrews 6 to challenge pastors to remain anchored in their calling from Christ.

“We have this hope we are to seize hold of, this hope that exists in eternal life and this hope that ex-

See PASTORS, page 16



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Please send résumés
to: Melba Dean,
P.O. Box 593, Swartz, LA 71281
or call 318.343.1688.

Minister of Worship and Families
Ebenezer Baptist Church of Jonesboro, LA is currently seeking God's person to serve in the role of full time Minister of Worship and Families. The ideal person would have proficiency in music as well as experience directing a choir, including special events, leading worship, teaching/ministering to families, and other ministry experience. Some Theological education is preferred but not required.
Email résumés to: office@ebcchurch.com
Mail-in résumés to: Ebenezer Baptist Church
211 Ebenezer Church Road
Jonesboro, LA 71251

SEEKING A FULL-TIME PASTOR
Fellowship Baptist Church, Dubach, LA is seeking a full-time pastor
Please send résumé to:
Dr. William H. Green,
Chairman Search Committee
625 Hunt Road • Dubach, Louisiana 71235
or call 318.245.9858

FULL-TIME PASTOR
Leesville First Baptist, Leesville, LA is seeking a full-time pastor.
Please send résumés to: Roger Rolon,
399 Liberty Creek Road,
Leesville, LA 71446
or First Baptist Church,
P. O. Box 1568, Leesville, LA 71496.

SEEKING A PASTOR
First Baptist Church Morgan City is seeking a full-time pastor.
Email résumés to
fbcmcpastorsearch1@gmail.com
or mail to
Search Committee
First Baptist Church Morgan City
1915 Victor II Blvd.
Morgan City, LA 70380

SEEKING A BI-VOCATIONAL PASTOR
First Baptist Church Sicily Island, LA is seeking résumés for a bi-vocational pastor. Email résumés to
amswalter@gmail.com
or mail to Search Committee,
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2676 Hwy 8 • Sicily Island, LA 71368
For more information, call 318.758.4412

SEEKING A FULL-TIME PASTOR
Goodwill Baptist Church in Oak Grove, LA, is seeking a full-time pastor.
Call Johnny Smith at 318.428.2146
or Kevin Tubbs at 318.372.2777
or email résumés to
dorn@richlandba.org

SEEKING A WORSHIP MINISTER
Hebron Baptist Church in Denham Springs, LA is seeking a part-time Worship Minister. Please send résumés to Hebronwlds@gmail.com or mail to Hebron Baptist Church
24063 LA-16
Denham Springs, LA 70726

SEEKING PART-TIME WORSHIP MINISTER
The Open Door Church in Lafayette, LA is seeking a part-time Worship Minister. This paid position requires about 15 hours per week. The Worship Minister will need strong leadership, a sincere love for Christ and people and a strong understanding of what true worship really is. Additionally, our church is seeking to reach out to our community and grow significantly over the next 5 years, moving the position to full time.
Please email résumés to search@opendoorla.org.

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Please send your résumé to:
kabg11@gmail.com

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Music Search Committee,
143 S. Church St.,
Heflin, LA 71039

YOUTH MINISTER
Highland Baptist Church,
1509 Ark. Rd, West Monroe La 71291;
seeking part-time or full-time youth minister; email résumé to prelmor54@gmail.com.
or mail your résumé to the church.

BI-VOCATIONAL PASTOR
Parkerson Avenue Baptist Church in Crowley, LA is seeking a bi-vocational pastor
Please send résumés to Parkerson Baptist Church,
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Crowley, LA
70527-0469

PART-TIME YOUTH LEADER
St. Clair Baptist Church is seeking a part-time youth leader. Please submit résumés to:
Search Committee,
c/o Dennis Ellis,
27 Penn Mar Drive,
Boyce, LA 71409.

FULL-TIME PASTOR
Unity Baptist Church
DeRidder, LA
is seeking a full-time pastor.
Send résumé to: Pastor Search Committee
P.O. Box 1342
DeRidder, LA 70634
E-mail ubcpulpit@gmail.com
ubcderidder.com

STUDENT MINISTER
Thompson Road Baptist Church in Slidell, La., is seeking a part-time student minister.
Anyone interested can submit their résumé to Randy Boyett at rbtrbc@yahoo.com.
For more information, call 985.690.6077.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Do you have a Revival, Homecoming, a new pastor, a community outreach or a concert? The Baptist Message would love to share your church news with the rest of the state. It is very easy to do, just send in your information (who, what, where and when) to philip@baptistmessage.com or call 318.449.4345. To get your event in the paper, please submit your information three weeks prior to the event.

IN REMEMBRANCE

■ **Glen Wagnon**, 80, a native of DeRidder and resident of Baton Rouge passed away November 3. He also served in full-time ministry for over 40 years in churches throughout Louisiana -- Ludington Baptist, DeRidder; Baptist Temple, Alexandria; Northside Baptist, Lafayette; First Baptist Church, Olla; First Baptist Church, Starks and Emmanuel Baptist Church, Oakdale. He also served on the Board of Trustees for the Baptist Message for a number of years. Following his retirement he continued to preach as an interim and had supply preaching roles for numerous churches. He preached his last sermon only four weeks before his death. In his spare time, he was an avid hunter, fisherman, and LSU sports fan. He was preceded in death by his mother, Elizabeth Sheppard; by his father, Malvin Wagnon, Sr.; and by his sister, Virginia Wagnon Henderson. He is survived by his wife of 50 years, Billie Wagnon; his son, Robert Wagnon; his daughter, Ruth Payne; his five grandchildren Hannah, Paul, Mary, Sarah, and Ethan; and his brother, Malvin Wagnon, Jr.

■ **Jerry H. Edmondson**, 86, passed away October 30, 2019. Born September 13, 1933 in Newellton to Frank and Opal Colvin Edmondson, Edmondson was a graduate of Lake Providence High School, Louisiana Tech University, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and Luther Rice Seminary. He joined the U.S. Air Force. He was a veteran of the U.S. Air Force serving 30 years of active duty and in the reserves and retired with the rank of Colonel. A long-time member for First Baptist Church, West Monroe, he served as Director of Missions for the Northwest and Morehouse Baptist Association from December 1978 until he retired in December 1999. He taught the Tension Life Group at First West for many years. He was active in community and civic affairs. He was a member of the Rotary Club of West Monroe and was a member of the Board of Directors of the Monroe-West Monroe Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Chennault Aviation and Military Museum and the West Monroe Heritage and Preservation Commission. He is preceded in death by his parents and by his brother Ned Edmondson of Lake Providence. Edmondson is survived by his wife of 56 years, Patsy Pippen Edmondson, a son, Eric Edmondson and wife, Gina, a granddaughter, Brooke and a grandson, Grant. He is also survived by his sister, Alyce Edmondson Henley and husband Coy of Norphlet, AR; sister, Shirley Edmondson Crump and husband Dr. Kenny Crump of Ruston; brother, Gene Edmondson and wife Jo of Lake Providence and sister-in-law, Merle Edmondson of Lake Providence.

■ **Robert C. Miller**, 87, passed away on November 8, 2019 in Sherman, Texas. Born on December 21, 1932 in Negreet to Rev. Versie Robert Miller and Florie Sibley Miller, he was laid to rest at Oak Grove Cemetery in Converse. He graduated from Oak Grove High School in 1952 and later graduated from Louisiana College in Pineville with a BA in History and Religious Education. He served as a minister in the DeSoto Baptist Association for over 45 years while pastoring churches at Aimwell, Benson and Mansfield. He also worked more than 40 years at Community Bank and was on the Board of Directors at the time of his death. His favorite hobby was spending time with his grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his parents. Left to cherish his memory is his wife of 67 years, Jean Brown Miller of Sherman, Texas; son, Larry R. Miller, M.D., PHD and wife, Cecilia of Sherman, Texas; brother, Julius Miller of Ragley, Louisiana; grandchildren, Robert Stephen Mill-

er and wife, Jordan of San Antonio, Texas and Thomas Lee Miller of Sherman, Texas.

ON THE MOVE

- **Randy Bowman** has resigned as pastor of Lakeview Community Church in Catahoula to become the new pastor at First Baptist Church Delcambre.
- **Herb Cowan** has retired as Pastor of First Baptist Church, French Settlement.
- **Chase Stanley** is the new associate pastor/student minister at First Baptist Church, Slidell.
- **Andy Allred** has resigned as pastor of Litroe Baptist Church, Marion to become the new pastor at Zion Hill Baptist Church, Farmerville beginning in December.
- **Frank Nihart** is the new minister of music at First Baptist Church, Farmerville.
- **Terry (wife Renee) Mims** is the new pastor at Rocky Branch Baptist Church in Rocky Branch, LA.
- **Bill (wife Linda) Robertson** is the new pastor at Fellowship Baptist Church, Trout.

LAGNIAPPE

- Washington Baptist Church, Washington: **Volunteers carpenters needed** to install a stud wall inside a metal building. Approximately a 2-3 day project. Visit historic Washington and enjoy good Cajun hospitality with us. Call Pastor Louis Charrier at 337.308.0336 or email louis.charrier@yahoo.com if you can help.
- **George Meredith is available** for interim or supply music director in a 50-mile radius around Monroe. Call 318.376.1865.
- First Mount Nebo Baptist Church, Nebo: **From the Manger to the Cross walk-thru**, November 30, 6 p.m. and December 1, 8 p.m. Event is located at the Nebo Ball Park, HWY 777, Jena LA., in the Nebo Community. What better way to kickoff the Christmas season than with a walk-thru of the life of Jesus Christ, who's birth is the true reason we celebrate Christmas! The walk through begins with the prophesy for Jesus' birth and concludes with his resurrection. This is a handicap accessible event and perfect for all ages! For more information call Erica at (318) 419-3566. Pastor: Mark Breland.
- First Baptist Church, Houma: **Very Merry Christmas Tour 2019**, December 1, 6 p.m. Cost: \$25. Featuring: NewSong, Mac Powell and The Family Reunion, Citizen Way. For more information, contact the church at www.fbchouma.com or call 985.851.2520.
- Start Baptist Church, Start: **Richland Baptist Association Christmas Choir Festival**, December 1, 6 p.m.
- First Baptist Church, Shreveport: **Holiday in South Highlands**, December 1, 4-7 p.m. Christmas market, Live Nativity, carnival, petting zoo, live music, food trucks and more.
- First Baptist Church, Many: **Southern Plainsmen in concert**, December 1, 11 a.m. Pastor: Jonathan Bost.
- Noble Baptist Church, Noble: **Southern Plainsmen in concert**, December 1, 6 p.m. Pastor: Jimmy Price.
- First Baptist Church, Pineville: **First@First Business Leader Luncheon**, December 2, noon. Speaker: **Larry Turner**, pastor of Christian Love Baptist Church, Alexandria. Cost: \$10 (lunch catered by Southern Creations) and open to the business community. Please RSVP by 8 a.m. on December 2 to Lori Pruitt at lpruitt@fbcpineville.net. Pastor: Stewart Holloway.
- First Baptist Church, Lafayette: **2019 K-LOVE Christmas Tour**, December 5, 7-10 p.m. Come and join Matthew West, Matt Maher, I Am They and Hannah Kerr on the K-LOVE Christmas Tour as they celebrate the reason for the season. This family friendly show will be sure to your warm your heart with holiday favorites you know and love. Cost: \$26.55 and \$75.
- First Baptist Church, Denham Springs: **CHRISTMASVILLE Spectacular! 2019**, December 5-8

and December 12-15, 6 & 7 p.m. Tickets are free at www.eventbrite.com/e/christmasville-spectacular-2019-tickets-77149818183. Everyone will start indoors in our auditorium with our presentation of "Welcome to Christmasville!" where we'll sing along with great Christmas carols and be entertained through sight and sound. They'll move outside to Christmasville Village or to the Winter Wonderland in the Gym. They'll encounter carolers and interactive story cabins where cast members and actors invite them into the stories surrounding the first Christmas at the cabins. When they enter the Winter Wonderland in our gym, they'll be greeted by authentic sights, smells, and sounds of Christmas. Families will find Santa and his helpers hard at work busying themselves for Christmas Eve! The Christmasville Farm is where guests can interact with farm animals and then kids can catch a ride on the Bayou Express Train for a fun ride. This is a fun and interactive experience for the whole family! Pastor: Leo Miller.

■ Beauregard Baptist Women's Mission and Ministry **Second Annual Food Tasting Event - In Good Taste**, December 6, 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. at the Wooten Theatre, 102 E 1st St, DeRidder, LA 70634. Cost: \$5. Sample more than 30 delicious, mouthwatering foods/confections. Also receive a cookbook with a recipe of every food prepared. For more information call Jasmine at 337.202.4043 or 318.729.8922.

■ First Baptist Church, Slidell: **Parenting Seminar; Shepherding a Child's Heart**, December 6-7, Friday, 7-9:15 p.m., Saturday 8:30 a.m. (breakfast), 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m. (seminar). Speaker: Tedd Tripp. Cost: \$10. Childcare available thru sixth grade by online registration. Pastor: Casey Stark.

■ Eastern Louisiana Baptist Association, Walker: **Retirement reception honoring Freddie and Elaine Arnold**, December 7, 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. Everyone is invited to come give Freddie Arnold special thanks for his 10 years of service to the ELBA. The office is located at 9126 Comar Drive, Walker. DOM: Richard Blue.

■ First Baptist Church, Moss Bluff: **Christmas Time with Masters4**, December 7, 4:30 p.m. Pastor: Steve Bennett.

■ Fair Park Baptist Church, West Monroe: **One Hope Christmas musical & reception**, December 8, 6 p.m. A church wide reception will follow the performance. Christmas morning service, December 25, 10 a.m. Pas-

tor: Waymond Warren.

■ Trinity Baptist Church, Lake Charles: **The Gift - Christian Worship Celebration** as part of the Lake Area Christmas Celebration, December 8, 6-8 p.m. Pastor: Steve James

■ First Baptist Church, Amite: **A Night of Christmas Praise**, December 8, 6:30 p.m. A fellowship will take place afterwards. Pastor: Trey Waldrop.

■ First Baptist Church, Bossier: **Point of Grace in concert**, December 8, 10:30 a.m. Pastor: Brad Jurakovich.

■ First Baptist Church, Winnfield: **Joseph Habedank in concert**, December 8, 6 p.m.

■ Eastwood Baptist Church, Houghton: **Choirs & Carols - The Moment**, December 8, 6-7:30 p.m. Join us for a night of worship presented by Eastwood Worship Choir, Children's Choirs, Youth Choir, 55+ Choir & Praise Hands. Pastor: Rusty Shuler.

■ First Baptist Church, Ruston: **Celebration Choir Christmas Musical**, December 11, 6:15 p.m. Pastor: Chris Craig

■ First Baptist Church, Mandeville: **A Mandeville Christmas Live Nativity**, December 13, 14, 15, 6-8 p.m. nightly. Pastor: Corey Fontan.

■ First Baptist Church, Covington: **The Story of Amazing Love Musical**, December 13, 7 p.m. and December 14 at 2 p.m. & 6 p.m. Pastor: Waylon Bailey.

■ Broadmoor Baptist Church, Shreveport: **2019 Fa La La Fest**, December 13, 4-9 p.m. Make plans now to shop with our amazing vendors, eat some wonderful food, and sing along with our carolers! There will be something for everyone from the young to the young at heart. This event is FREE and open to the public. Pastor: Chuck Pourciau.

■ Ridgcrest Baptist Church, Ridgcrest: **Trevor Thomas Drama Ministries**, December 14, 6 p.m. Pastor: Dennis Baker.

■ North Monroe Baptist Church, Monroe: **The Sounds of the Holidays**, December 14, 7 p.m. Featuring the Monroe Symphony Orchestra. Cost: \$30. The Monroe Symphony Orchestra will be having their December concert in the Main Worship Center at North Monroe. Pastor: Bill Dye.

■ Philadelphia Baptist Church, Deville: **Light has Come**, December 14, 6:30 p.m.; December 15, 10 a.m. & 6:30 p.m.; December 16, 6:30 p.m. For

more information, call the church at 318.442.0754 or email madelyn@pbcministry.com. Pastor: Philip Robertson.

■ Goldonna Baptist Church, Goldonna: **Trevor Thomas Drama Ministries**, December 15, 5 p.m. Pastor: Jason Wommack.

■ Summer Grove Baptist Church, Shreveport: **A Night of Hope**, December 15, 5-7 p.m. Join us for a musical Night of Hope presented by the Summer Grove choir and orchestra as we celebrate Christ's birth! Pastor: Heath Peloquin.

■ Rocky Branch Baptist Church, Rocky Branch: **'Christmas Message' Cantata**; December 15, 10:45 a.m.; Music Director: Phillis Gates. Pastor: Terry Mims.

■ First Baptist Church, Jonesboro: **Song of Joy! (Christmas Cantata and Fellowship)**, December 15, 6 p.m. Guaranteed to be more than 'just another Christmas performance', Song of Joy will lead your congregation and visitors in grand celebration of this joyous season, and anointed moments of worship and praise, while offering non-believers the life-changing opportunity to come to know Christ and declare Him Lord. Pastor: Brian McAllister.

■ Longview Baptist Church, Deville: **Messiah Heaven's Glory Cantata**, December 15, 10:30 a.m. Presented by the Longview choir. Pastor: Robby Poole.

■ First Baptist Church, West Monroe: **Northeast Louisiana Christmas Celebration at First West**, December 21-22, 6 p.m. The NELA Christmas Celebration is your opportunity to experience the sights and sounds of the Christmas season. You will experience all the comforts of the Christmas season. You'll celebrate the birth of Jesus and reflect on the silent night by candlelight. Help us eliminate the medical debt of Ouachita Parish by purchasing a \$5 ticket to the Celebration. We're doing this through a partnership with RipMedicalDebt. RIPMedicalDebt works with collection agencies to pay pennies to the dollar on medical debt. Pastor: Michael Wood.

■ First Baptist Church, Ruston: **Touch Ruston**, December 21, 10 a.m., December 23-24, 5:30 p.m. **Candlelight Service**. Pastor: Chris Craig.

■ Longview Baptist Church, Deville: **Christmas Candlelight Service**, December 22, 6 p.m. Pastor: Robby Poole.

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.

obi pxbi wtrp qxopj, obi btj wtrp copkxbjd, obi jrpb

rbjt jqx atpi wtrp cti; stp qx md cpoumtrd obi

kxpumsra, datf jt obcxp, obi ts cpxoj gmbibxdd, obi

pxyxbjxjq qmk ts jqx xnma.

ztxa jft:jqmpjxxb

Clues:
P = R; O = A

Answer to November 7 Scripture Crypto:
Romans eight: eighteen

STUDY: Homosexuals made, not born, that way

By Will Hall
Message Executive Editor

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. (LBM)—In one of the largest studies of its kind, researchers found that from 75 percent up to 92 percent of homosexual behavior is the result of the environment, not genetics.

In other words, cultural and social influences have an overwhelmingly greater impact on same-sex behavior than biology.

Importantly, the genome study of nearly half a million participants from the U.K., U.S. and Sweden determined “there certainly is no single genetic determinant (sometimes referred to as the ‘gay gene’ in the media).”

Of particular interest, the 8 percent to 25 percent of (minimal) genetic influence on same-sex sexual behavior was tied to genetic indicators which also predict behaviors “such as smoking, cannabis use, risk-taking,

and the personality trait ‘openness to experience’ as well as “sexual behavior, attraction, identity, and fantasies.”

Likewise, same-sex sexual behavior was “genetically correlated with several psychiatric or mental health traits” such as depression, schizophrenia and bipolar disorder.

Of special significance, the study did not examine sexual identity but instead focused on sexual behavior. In July 2014, the CDC reported 1.6 percent of U.S. adults identified themselves as homosexuals and another 0.7 percent described themselves as bisexual. However, the data provided in the report indicated that the percentage of participants who had engaged at least once in same-sex sexual behavior was about double the percentage of persons who identified as same-sex individuals.

The study intentionally omitted transsexual

CULTURALNEWS

individuals.

Chick fil-A drops 2 Christian charities, denies caving in to LGBT demands

ATLANTA (LBM)—Chick-fil-A has announced it will drop the Fellowship of Christian Athletes and the Salvation Army from its foundation’s charitable giving program after completing multi-year commitments to both.

The move comes as the Christian-founded company has endured severe attacks from homosexual groups that attack the Fellowship of Christian Athletes and the Salvation Army as anti-LGBT because both ministries champion marriage as a covenant relationship between one man and one woman. According to public records, in 2018 the Chick-fil-A Foundation contributed \$1.65 million to the Fellowship of Christian Athletes and \$115,000 to the Salvation Army.

The attacks on Chick-fil-A include denials in recent years by airports and universities to prevent the company from opening stores on their respective premises.

In reporting the change in its charitable giving policy, the Chick-fil-A

Foundation announced its plans for “a more focused giving approach” in distributing \$9 million in 2020 “to a smaller number of organizations working exclusively in the areas of education, homelessness and hunger.”

In an email to the Christian Post, a Chick-fil-A spokesperson stressed, “No organization will be excluded from future consideration – faith-based or non-faith based.”

The Fellowship of Christian Athletes has not commented publicly, but the Salvation Army issued a statement expressing sadness “that a corporate partner has felt it necessary to divert funding to other hunger, education and homelessness organizations — areas in which the Salvation Army, as the largest social services provider in the world, is already fully committed.”

Meanwhile, one of Chick-fil-A’s most vocal defenders (in the past), former Arkansas governor, Mike Huckabee, decried the restaurant chain’s change in charitable giving policy as “surrendering to critics and betraying loyal customers.”

On Twitter he reminded followers that he coordinated a national Chick-fil-A Appreciation Day in 2012 after the fast food favorite was “being bullied by militant hate groups.”

“Today, Chick-fil-A be-

trayed local customers for \$\$,” he wrote. “I regret believing they would stay true to convictions of founder Truett Cathy. Sad.”

Tennessee Baptists reject controversial SBC resolution

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. (LBM)—Tennessee Baptists have broken with Southern Baptists with regard to two controversial concepts creeping into Southern Baptist seminaries, passing a rival resolution at the recently held state annual meeting that condemns Critical Race Theory and Intersectionality.

The consensus statement said that Tennessee Baptists “are deeply troubled that some are injecting CRT and Intersectionality into theological context” and that the state convention’s members “strongly denounce CRT and Intersectionality as inconsistent with the Biblical worldview and theology.”

The Tennessee declaration stands in stark contrast to a resolution passed in June by Southern Baptist messengers that endorsed Critical Race Theory and Intersectionality as “a set of analytical tools” which provide “selective insights ... to understand multifaceted social dynamics.”

Critical Race Theory can be traced to Derrick Bell, formerly of the Harvard Law School, who insisted that all formal structures in our country such as “the law” perpetuate “white privilege.”

Meanwhile, Kimberlé Crenshaw, of the UCLA School of Law, coined the idea of Intersectionality to claim every intersection in life creates “privileging of whiteness or maleness” that result in the oppression of women of color, adding that even black maleness contributes to the subjugation of minority females.

Bell and Crenshaw are considered far-left liberals by critics and supporters.

Interestingly, just two days after the SBC annual meeting in Birmingham, Alabama, R. Albert Mohler,

See CULTURAL NEWS, page 13



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LSU longsnapper is a NFL prospect, but a confirmed follower of Christ

By Will Hall
Message Executive Editor

BATON ROUGE (LBM) —Blake Ferguson has had a remarkable history in football in a unique position.

He came to LSU as the number one long snapper as a senior in high school, and last year he was named the best collegiate long snapper in the nation.

On top of that, he took over that job for the Tigers from his brother Reid who was signed after graduation as the long snapper for the NFL's Buffalo Bills, and, scouts are predicting Blake will play at that level on Sundays, too.

But Sundays have another special meaning for the professional football prospect.

He is a committed Christian, and his home-

town congregation in Smyrna, Georgia, is Christ Covenant Church, a Georgia Baptist member.

Moreover, as much as Blake contributes to the success of the Tigers on the gridiron, observers say he makes an equally important impact off the field.



Blake Ferguson

Indeed, Andy Stroup, the greater Baton Rouge area director for the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, called Ferguson "the main guy" in the Fellowship of Christian Athletes chapter at LSU.

"He has been a part of the leadership team -- going on his third year," Stroup told the *Baptist Message*. "He is a tremendous man."

"When Blake walks into the room the energy goes up," Stroup continued. "He has allowed us to speak life into him, and he has done likewise with

CULTURALNEWS

other players.

Ferguson said that he tries to take that same energy for learning more about and sharing Christ with others into the locker room and onto the field.

"As an athlete, my faith has always had a huge impact on my approach to the game," Ferguson wrote to the *Baptist Message* in response to a written interview. "At FCA, we talk all the time about 'doing sports God's way.' This means that every snap we take, every time we run down the court, whatever it is, we represent Christ in the way that we play."

His faith even penetrates his game day preparations.

"Each day before our team meeting, at the top of my notebook I write 'Glorify God with your work today,'" he explained. "To me, this is a daily reminder to myself

of the reason that I do what I do."

Furthermore, there is a "culture of dependence on the Lord" on the team, Ferguson added, citing in particular Coach Ed Orgeron's spiritual leadership.

"While he can get fired up on the sidelines and during practice, he also takes time to spend time with the Lord, and as a player that means a lot," he shared. "He is in chapel every week and encourages players to be in there, also. And he leads the team in prayer following every practice and every game, showing our consistent dependence on

the Lord to provide for us every single day."

So far, the Tigers are 9-0 in a dream season, which includes a victory over the Alabama Crimson Tide and a first place ranking by the College Football Playoff Selection Committee.

But Ferguson puts these accomplishments and accolades in perspective: "I have an incredible platform as a collegiate athlete to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with a large number of people whether it's with my actions on the field or literally sharing the Gospel with them one on one."

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Cultural News from page 12

president of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, spoke out against the SBC resolution, despite the fact that one of his professors, Curtis Woods, chaired the Committee on Resolutions. Indeed, three members of his faculty actively promote Critical Race Theory and Intersectionality.

During his June 14 podcast, "The Briefing," he condemned both of the concepts as "Marxist" in origin and as emerging from "worldviews and from thinkers who were directly contrary to the Christian faith."

He also rejected the contention stated in the

resolution that these ideas are just "analytical tools," saying that "in the common discourse in the United States and especially in public argument and higher education, both Critical Race Theory and Intersectionality are far more than analytical tools."

"The main consequence of Critical Race Theory and Intersectionality is identity politics, and identity politics can only rightly be described as antithetical to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We have to see identity politics as disastrous for the culture and nothing less than devastating for the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ."

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Speakers from page 3

Christ and renew our first love.”

JEFFREY FRIEND

During the convention sermon, Jeffrey Friend, pastor of the Suburban Baptist Church in New Orleans, thanked Louisiana Baptists for the support, encouragement, financial resources and other assistance they provided to rebuild the church facilities after an EF-3 tornado heavily damaged the campus, Feb. 7, 2017.

“It’s a precious things to me to be able to say it loud that I’m Southern Baptist and proud,” Friend said. “As I was sitting in the debris after the tornado hit on that Tuesday, I began to talk to my master, ‘Lord, what am I going to do?’

Friend, whose church previously sustained damage from Hurricane



Jeffrey Friend

Katrina in 2005 and Hurricane Gustav in 2008, said at times he has felt like the man the Good Samaritan helped, who was left battered and torn on the side of the road. In the end, the man was restored.

“God gave me an opportunity to tell you what a certain man never got to tell the Samaritan,” Friend said. “After the Samaritan did so much for him, he left. But nowhere did it say a certain man got the opportunity to say thank you.”

JAMIE DEW

Jamie Dew, the newly elected president of NOBTS, shared with messengers that the school will emphasize servanthood during his tenure, and, that this is the focus in its new mission statement: “New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and Leavell College prepare servants to walk with Christ, proclaim His truth, and fulfill His mission.”

The seminary also has adopted four areas to strengthen -- Leavell College, enrollment strategy, marketing and communications and denominational relationships -- while continuing to proclaim the truth of the Gospel and fulfill Christ’s mission, he said.

“We believe that New Orleans as a city and that New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary as a school is vastly cooler than Southern Baptists think that it is,” he said. “We have to retell the story of the school.

“This is a faculty that inspires me,” he continued. “This is a faculty that I am proud to line up by and be



Jamie Dew

numbered among. These are men and women that have given their lives, not just to the academic profession of preparing the next generation servants, but they are themselves practitioners of the Gospel ministry. Virtually all of them serve in local church and they are doing it in locations where difficulty and darkness abounds.

“They are on the front lines of Gospel ministry in a way that I’ve never seen faculty do,” he offered. “I don’t know a better faculty, I don’t know a better city to learn in, to prepare and be a pastor and servant of Jesus Christ.”

urgency that accompanies the preaching of the Gospel.

“We are here because so many have yet to hear and yet to prepare for that day,” Chitwood said. “That’s why your church does its work where your church is located. That’s why your church extends its reach across Louisiana by partnering with other sister churches in the Louisiana Baptist Convention. That’s why your church does its work among the nations by partnering with all the churches in the Southern Baptist Convention to see that the Gospel gets to the nations. Just as God in His grace led us to hear, God in his grace wants them to hear. It’s up to us.”



Clint Pressley

CLINT PRESSLEY

Clint Pressley closed out the annual meeting by encouraging pastors to rejoice in all circumstances.

Pressley, pastor of Hickory Grove Baptist Church in Charlotte, North Carolina, said pastors must develop a joyful mindset, even when difficult times arise.

Pressley, who spoke from John 3, emphasizing verse 30, said once pastors develop a mindset of humility, an attitude of joy will follow, even in the midst of hardship.

“Ministry is filled with hard things,” he said. “John is aware that he is what God had given him to be, nothing more. He is just that. He was a forerunner. He was a voice, nothing else.

“Can you believe the truth that God didn’t create everybody here to have something big and fun and exciting,” he continued. “We’re not all created as something as the world defines greatness. He did, however, create every single one of us to glorify Him as part of His divine plan. You were created so that in your life Jesus, in His glory, is increasing even as you decrease.”



Paul Chitwood

PAUL CHITWOOD

Paul Chitwood, president of the International Mission Board, challenged messengers to preach and teach with urgency about the Lord’s coming.

“Might it be that we fail to understand the urgency of the Bible’s closing verse, ‘I am coming soon said the Lord Jesus?’” Chitwood asked, referencing Revelation 20:21-22.

“On the day that He comes, the opportunity to repent will have passed because at that point you cannot be saved,” he said. “And that’s why there must be an

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Couple from page one

through baptism at Canaan Baptist Church in Leesville.

“We had been going right along with our regular life for quite a few years and knew something was missing,” James told the *Baptist Message*. “One night it hit us we needed to change our life. The morning after we gave our lives to Christ we both woke up with this feeling of newness. Months went by and we realized that we needed to take that next step of obedience through baptism in front of our family members. Both of us lived all these years

without Christ and now we can’t get enough of serving Him every day.”

SOW AND REAP

The Jameses were among four people baptized Sept. 8, and nine since January, at Canaan Baptist Church.

Pastor Jason Nolde said the baptisms reflect an increased passion for reaching people where they are and discipleship by his congregation, which averages 125 for its Sunday morning worship services.

On Sunday evenings at Canaan the adults gather

for discipleship training and bible study classes.

Meanwhile, the youth take part in Wednesday night bible studies, Sunday night mission classes and weekly visitations to homebound members and others in the community.

Most recently, the church members joined others from Vernon Baptist Association to serve breakfast to carnival workers at West Louisiana Forestry Festival.

Their labor of love helped sow Gospel seeds that resulted in a spiritual harvest that included the baptism of an inmate from the Vernon Parish Jail.

Nolde said he is thankful to serve as pastor of a church with a huge heart for others.

“It’s great to be a part of a church that is an ‘amen’ church,” he said. “They are the most loving and giving church I have been a part of, and they are willing to help anyone in the name of Christ.

“One of our mottos is ‘come on out and let us love on you,’” he

continued. “We do non-traditional things to reach out to folks who may not come or may not be able to come into the church building. You won’t lead anyone to the Lord by

beating them with a Bible. It may be by simply living it out loud to love them to Jesus. We realize that we all have our problems and we love on them where they are.”

Bahamas from page 7

teers to continue the effort in 2020.

Due to limited options to travel to the islands, the next crews will need to arrive in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, on Jan. 4 and catch the Balearia Caribbean Ferry early Jan. 5, returning to the U.S. mainland Jan. 10.

More teams will be needed for at least six months, McMillan said, adding that prospective volunteers need to complete disaster relief certification no later than Dec. 10. Mud-out training and a background check can be completed online louisianabaptists.org/disaster-relief.

He also offered the reminder that a passport

is also needed to participate. Information about how to apply for or renew a passport can be found at <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/passports/how-apply.html>.

McMillan said that the Louisiana Baptist Disaster Relief will handle travel once on the island and that housing on the work site will be free but meals will cost \$12 per day.

Volunteers also are responsible for booking ferry tickets, a hotel room in Ft. Lauderdale and air travel from Louisiana. Paula Halle, a travel agent with Alexandria Pineville Travel Agency, is assisting with these arrangements and may be contacted at 318.487.8747.

Church Plants from page 2

Similarly, Luke wrote that growth was a natural result of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit within a congregation.

Acts 2:47 tells us that in the early church the people were, “Praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.”

Clearly, the primary goal of leaders is to “build up” the body of Christ in terms of maturity in knowledge and understanding and behavior; and, just as clearly, a measure of success in the discipleship of others is growth in numbers – disciples produce other disciples.

DOING MORE TOGETHER

Fortunately, Louisiana Baptists are blessed to have resources and expertise in helping with the health and growth of your church.

Church planters can expect formal training in church growth principles as part of the Greenhouse Training provided by the LBC missions and Ministries Team. It includes the principles, processes and structures needed for the “training up” of members to be a healthy and growing congregation from the start as a new work.

Meanwhile the LBC Evangelism and Church Growth Team offer training seminars, consultations, resources and complete systems that include these same elements for ongoing growth and health for established congregations.

gations.

Regardless of where a church is in its life cycle, keep health and growth a priority at all times!

-- Nurture and make disciples.

-- Evaluate what you do and how you do it, in terms of what kind of spiritual difference is evident in your people.

-- Seek constantly to improve the width (the number of people you are ministering to) and the depth (increasing the training and the ministry assignments) to keep growing your people.

REAPING THE RESULTS

Like planting a garden, growth comes in its own time. You can’t make it happen overnight, but you can create an environment in which growth will result in due season.

Like most leadership skills, becoming proficient in nurturing the health and growth of followers is a matter of focus on Scripture and the power of the Holy Spirit and grasping the key practices that emerge from studying and surrendering to both.

Lastly, don’t forget to be on guard against harmful attitudes and habits that might threaten the health and growth of your congregation like harmful bug-like infestations among crops in the field.

You don’t want to hang your head when someone asks, “How’re your crops doing?”

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Pastors from page 9

ists right now as we run this race,” said Trueblood, who serves as the director of student ministry for LifeWay Christian Resources. We will finish because it is Jesus that works mightily in us. It’s not my strength that runs this race because my strength was crucified long ago. But it is the strength of Christ that runs and I get to run in his wake because of what He has done and declared over me.”

Pointing people to Christ means becoming all things to all men, he said.

“If our churches are ever going to be cities of refuge, then I have to be a person of refuge,” he said. “It has to be in my heart. For your church to be a city of refuge, to be a place in your community where people go when they are hurting and fleeing from something in your life, the leadership has to be a

person of refuge and the people have to be people of refuge. ... Jesus died on a hill and He ascended to Heaven from atop of one and He said you and I are a city on a hill so that we can point people to the hope we have in Him.”

LEROY FOUNTAIN

Leroy Fountain, church health strategist for New Orleans Baptist Association and first vice president of the Louisiana Baptist Convention, closed out the Pastors’ Conference by reminding pastors to live with integrity.

“Daniel took a stand, even when it meant standing against the king,” he said. “We are called to do a great work but we are also called to a life of discipline. And if we are not disciplined enough to refuse the king’s delicacies, then we will never accomplish



Brian Blackwell photo

New Pastor Conference officers are (from left) Brad Delaughter, vice president, Satsuma Baptist Church, Livingston; David Goza, president, Jefferson Baptist Church, Baton Rouge; and James Doughty, secretary-treasurer, First Baptist Church, Monroe.

the great work that God has called us to.”

Preaching from Daniel 1, he said pastors must pray constantly, “build fences” to protect against Satan’s attacks, and be bold in their efforts for God, trusting Him ultimately for protection and rescue.

“Daniel dared to go against the rules,” he said.

has called you do a great work.”

LANGIAPPE

Elected to lead the 2019 Pastors Conference are: David Goza, pastor, Jefferson Baptist Church, Baton Rouge, president; Brad Delaughter, pastor, Satsuma Baptist Church, Livingston, vice-president; and, James Doughty, pastor, First Baptist Church, Monroe, secretary-treasurer.

Also, for the fifth year in a row, Louisiana College recognized excellence in the pastorate within groupings of worship attendance up to 125, 126 to 500 and more than 500. Within these congregational sizes, the school honored, respectively: Luther Sanson, pastor, Twin Oaks Baptist Church, Bastrop; Gonzalo Rodriquez, pastor, Good Shepherd Hispanic Baptist Church, Metairie; and, Fred Luter, pastor, Franklin Avenue Baptist Church, New Orleans.

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*<https://1079thelink.radio.com/blogs/kelly-meyers/heres-how-much-time-you-spend-looking-screens-lifetime>