



# THE BAPTIST MESSAGE

September 24, 2020  
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John 3:16

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## INSIDE:

- New church plant was at the right place, at the right time **Page 2**
- COVID-19 continues to ravage Louisiana's nursing homes **Page 4**
- NAMB officials say state leaders' complaints are flattering **Page 7**
- Additional coverage of Hurricane Laura **Page 10-13**



Amid the rubble, an American flag flies high and signals hope for residents of Cameron Parish. Photo/Norm Miller



Hurricane Laura's 150-mile-per-hour winds turned this neighborhood in Sulphur into a pile of debris. Photo/Jose Us



The walls from a home near Holly Beach were blown away as Hurricane Laura roared through the area. Photo/Norm Miller

# HURRICANE LAURA RAVAGES SWLA



Piles of debris lined the streets of Lake Charles after Hurricane Laura made her way through the area Aug. 27. The storm damaged structures and left thousands without electricity in the following weeks. Laura had sustained winds of 150 mph, making it the strongest storm ever to hit Louisiana. Photo/John Marcase

## Trinity is hub for ministry, DR, sharing the Gospel

By Norm Miller  
Message Correspondent

LAKE CHARLES, LA. (LBM) — When a hurricane leaves town, the ensuing days evoke whirlwinds of activity for Southern Baptist Disaster Relief. Trinity Baptist Church in Lake Charles is a hub of such ministry, reaching into the community with clean-up efforts, 20,000 meals a day,

See TRINITY, page 10



A Louisiana Baptist Disaster Relief team member uses a tractor to move debris to the street of a property where trees fell. -- Photo/SBDR

## EDITORIAL: Biden pulls a Hillary, ignores victims

ALEXANDRIA, La. (LBM) — It's a presidential election year, Louisiana has suffered another devastating natural disaster, and as Yogi Berra has said, "It's déjà vu all over again."

In 2016, presiden-

See BIDEN, page 12



WILL HALL  
Executive Editor  
Louisiana  
Baptist Message

## Triumph from tragedy, Laura survivor finds Christ

By Brian Blackwell  
Message Staff Writer

LAKE CHARLES, La. (LBM) — Paige LeDoux was deeply troubled when she encountered Louisi-

ana Baptist Disaster Relief chaplain Mark Morelock, pastor of Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church, Bogalusa, in the Trinity Baptist Church feeding line.

Since the beginning of

the year, LeDoux had seen a family member succumb to a life of drug addiction, and on top of that the novel coronavirus pan-

See TRIUMPH page 12

# New church plant was at the right place, at the right time

By John Kyle  
Louisiana Baptists Communications

KENNER, La. – Joshua Leiva was borderline suicidal following the loss of his grandmother, whom he affectionately called, Mama Sonia. Diagnosed with lung cancer in August of 2018, she lost her battle just a few months later. “I knew exactly how I wanted to take myself out

-- I’m going to be in my room,” he recalled. “I’m going find a noose and I’m going to hang myself in the closet.”

“I was the last person to see her alive,” continued Leiva. “I remember breaking down a couple of times when my family was not around, because I am more of a private person.”

As he battled feelings of despair and suicide,

his mother began attending Iglesia Celebration in Kenner in early 2019. Initially, he declined her invitation to attend -- until she said Iglesia was the kind of church she would have wanted to take Mama Sonia too.

“How could I turn that down?” Leiva said. “I went and that’s when I felt something at this church that I had never felt before. I felt embraced by all these people I didn’t know. It was awesome”

Jhorman Rivera, campus pastor of Iglesia Celebration, recalls contacting the family following their visit.

“I went to their home and they told me about what they were going through,” Rivera said. “Joshua contacted me later and we went to a local mall where he told me more about the situation relating to the passing of his grandmother and a relationship with a former girlfriend.”

Leiva recalls going into his room later in the week and everything “sunk in.”

“God, despite what I’m going through, I trust you and I have faith in you,” he prayed. “I just lifted up my hands and said ‘God, I’m yours. Whatever you need me to do, I’m here.’”

Rivera baptized Joshua in late 2019 and he continues to be involved in several ministries in the church.

## GBO BEARS FRUIT

Iglesia Celebration in Kenner launched in February 2019 with assistance from the Georgia Barnette State Missions Offering. It is one of 22 congregations the Louisiana Baptist Convention planted across the state in 2019.

Since 2010, the Georgia Barnette Offering has helped start just under 270 churches. Thirty-six of those have been new Hispanic congregations, doubling the number of existing LBC Hispanic churches since that time.

Iglesia Celebration in Kenner shares a building with its English-speaking sister congregation, Celebration Church in Kenner. Although just months old, the Hispanic flock was averaging more than 120 in worship attendance prior to the quarantine.

God has given Rivera a specific vision for who the church is attempting to reach, he said.

“Our vision is to be a church for people who don’t regularly attend the church, people who are not familiar with a Christian religious experience,” Rivera said. “We have developed a church that feels like family. It is a special environment, a good place, a place where you can stay”

**For more information and resources regarding the impact and reach of the Georgia Barnette State Missions Offering, visit [georgiabarnette.org](http://georgiabarnette.org).**

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- **Compassion for Kids** – We provide this ministry to meet the basic life needs of economically-challenged children and their families in Northeast Louisiana through partnerships with local churches.
- **Orphans Embrace** – We provide this ministry to serve poor and needy children in strategic areas around the world through mission volunteers, currently through a partnership with LA Reach Haiti.



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# COVID-19 continues to ravage Louisiana's nursing homes

By Will Hall  
 Message Executive Editor

ALEXANDRIA, La. (LBM) – Data released in September indicates that state policies put in place to protect nursing homes, such as prohibiting in-person visits from family and friends, are failing dramatically.

The frail residents of these group facilities suffered 51 percent of COVID-19 deaths in Louisiana during this timeframe despite widespread knowledge among policy makers that this clearly defined group is the most at-risk in the nation.

There are about 23,500 residents, on average, in Louisiana's eldercare residences, a mere half of one percent of the total population of the state. Yet, after Aug. 5 and before Sept. 2, dates corresponding to the release of Louisi-

ana Department of Health reports on nursing homes, this highest at-risk group was plagued with 361 of the 715 COVID-19 deaths in the state.

Because stringent restrictions already prohibit outside visits, the data suggest the virus is being transported into the facilities via caretakers and other staff and indicate the need to quarantine such facilities – mandating the isolation of staff and caretakers from the outside.

Some experts, such as Dr. Scott Atlas, argue that such targeted approaches are the most effective means to contain and eradicate the COVID-19 pandemic.

In fact, Atlas, a senior fellow at Stanford University's Hoover Institution, the former chief of neuroradiology at Stanford University Medical Center, and now the new-

est member of President Trump's COVID-19 advisors, specifically identified nursing home residents as "the highest risk" group and urged officials develop a commonsense "isolation policy to that group."

In April, Atlas published his views in *The Hill*, a Washington, D.C.-based news service, saying that "based on fundamental biology and the evidence already in hand" it is imperative to "strictly protect the known vulnerable" like nursing home residents as well as others who have underlying conditions that cause susceptibility to harm from COVID-19, while depending on self-isolation for those who are "mildly sick."

Meanwhile, the state will be implementing new testing procedures with resources provided by the Trump Administration which will allow results in 15 minutes. Because



Message File photo

State policies put in place to protect nursing homes are causing more harm than good according to data released by the Louisiana Department of Health in September.

the tests will be only twice-weekly, the most likely benefit of the rapid coronavirus testing equipment, which has only been distributed to seven facili-

ties so far, will be that it will allow family members (tested that day) to visit loved ones from whom they have been separated during the pandemic.



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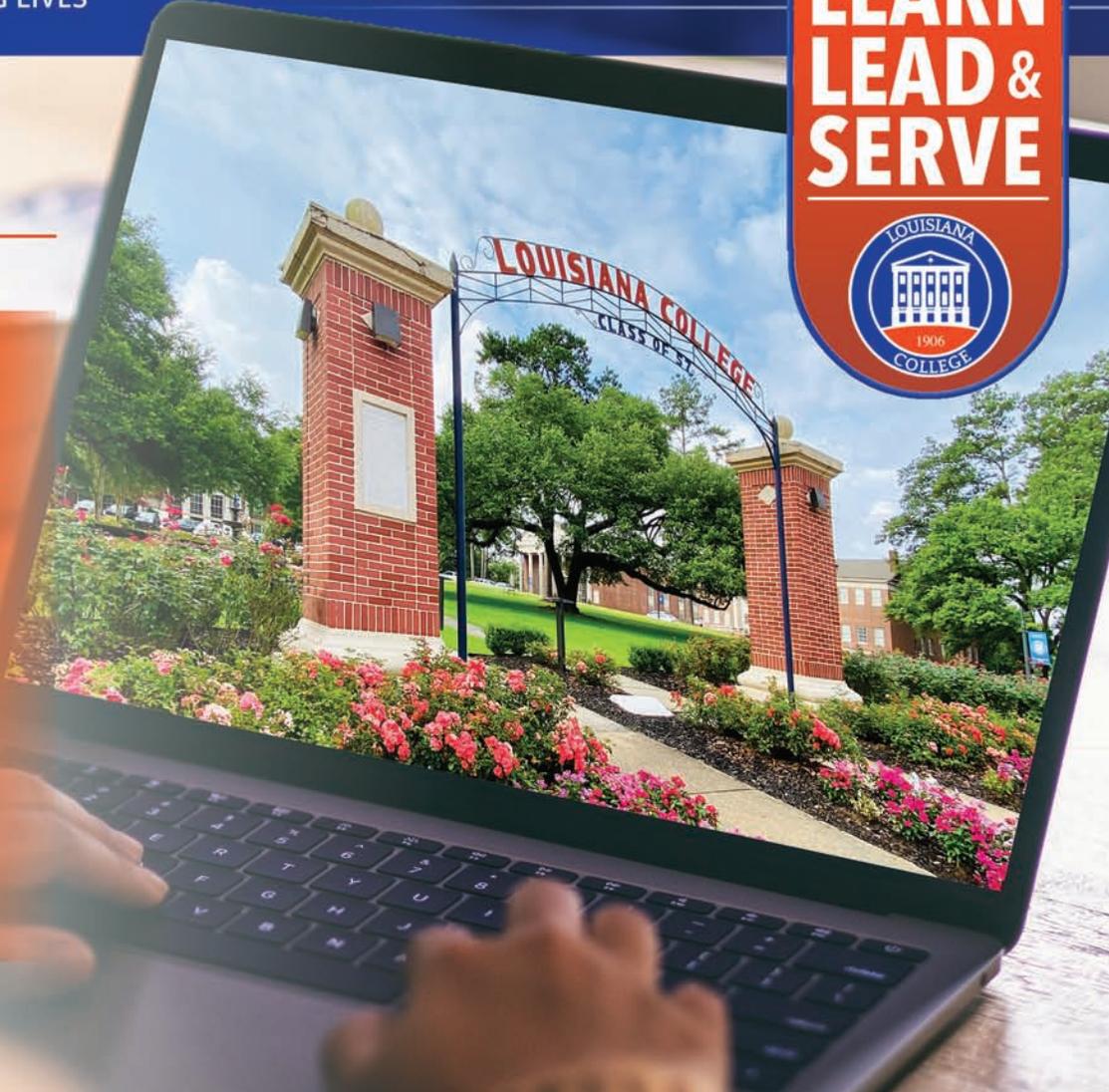
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# 2020 Commission update: Advance support for cooperative missions and ministries

**By Staff**  
Baptist Message

ALEXANDRIA, La. (LBM) – Louisiana Baptists are in the final year of implementing the President’s 2020 Commission Report, an initiative undertaken during the leadership of Waylon Bailey, pastor of the First Baptist Church in Covington, and the LBC president in 2012-2013.

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. These measures for improving the spiritual health and growth of the state were adopted by mes-

sengers at the 2013 Louisiana Baptist Convention Annual Meeting.

This article is the 10th in a series published by the Baptist Message to report what successes have been achieved toward the ambitious goals of the statewide initiative, as well as to note what objectives remain to be done.

**KAIROS NINE**

*Increase financial support through the Cooperative Program and the special mission offerings.*

Several attempts have been made to increase Cooperative Program support over the seven-year span of the 2020 initiative. While those efforts generated some interest, they have not been enough to reverse the downward trend in CP giving, Louisiana Baptist leaders said.

According to the LBC

Annual Reports, CP giving has decreased, from \$21,339,632 gifts received in 2013 to \$18,342,175 in 2019.

Furthermore, giving to the Georgia Barnette Offering for State Missions also has seen a decline, from \$1,982,759 gifts received in 2013 to \$1,521,351 in 2019. However, last year’s Georgia Barnette saw an increase from the previous year’s total of \$1,409,090.

The Pledge was one of the first official efforts to generate increased CP participation.

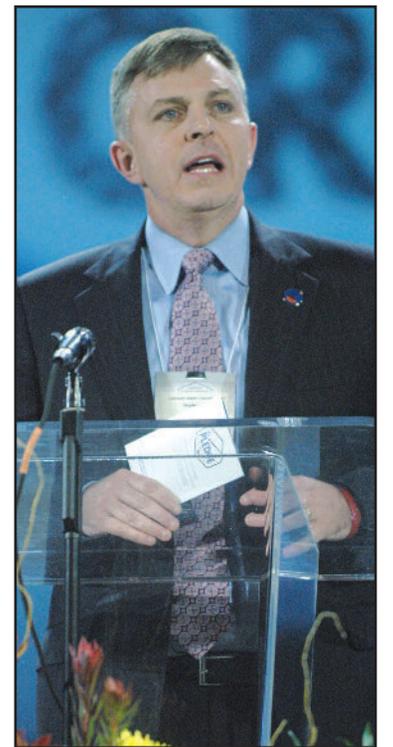
Launched in 2015, The Pledge was a pastor-driven initiative designed to highlight the effectiveness of cooperative missions and ministries. Steve Horn, then pastor of First Baptist Church, Lafayette, and president of the Louisiana Baptist Convention, led the first phase of this effort followed by Gevan Spinney, his successor

and pastor of First Baptist Church, Haughton, who spearheaded the second phase.

Additional efforts included use of print, video, web and social media to inform churches of how their participation in CP is empowering missions and ministries in Louisiana and beyond. Special offerings such as the Georgia Barnette Offering have seen an occasional spike due to a large gift.

Horn, now the executive director for Louisiana Baptists, publically stated his commitment to CP when he assumed his new role in May 2019.

“I will be a champion of the Cooperative Program,” he said. “A former church member of mine regularly asked the question ‘is this the best we can do’ relating to our CP giving. This is the question we must ask at every level of Louisiana Baptist life.”



Submitted photo

Louisiana Baptist Executive Director Steve Horn, when he served as president of the Louisiana Baptist Convention, asked messengers at the 2015 Annual Meeting to commit to the Pledge, a pastor-driven initiative designed to increase Cooperative Program giving.

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# First Baptist Church, Vinton: Down, but not out!

By Norm Miller

Message Correspondent

VINTON, La. (LBM) — Like many churches in Louisiana, First Baptist Church, Vinton, had the interior of its facilities deluged after Hurricane Laura ripped off a section of roof and blew away scores of shingles. The auditorium is now completely under tarp, but the damage was not limited to that area.

“Our church will have to be completely gutted,” said Pastor Bobby Daniel, whose office carpet squishes underfoot. Soaked but salvageable items are being wiped with an anti-mold solution, catalogued, and safely stored by a disaster recovery company, he said.

However, Hurricane Laura’s downpours did nothing to quench the congregation’s desire to worship on Sunday, Sept. 13, when about 40 people gathered on the lawn.



Philip Timothy photo

Despite sustaining major damage from Hurricane Laura, First Baptist Church, Vinton, held worship Sunday, Sept. 13 on the church lawn with the heat index topping 100 degrees. The church will have to be completely gutted said Pastor Bobby Daniel.

With sweat rolling down his back and face with the heat index topping 100 degrees, Daniel poured out his heart while

preaching from Isaiah 41:10, “So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you

and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”

God’s strength, protection, and provision have

shown up in many ways, Daniel said, including several sizable monetary gifts from friends and relatives. The church will give \$1,000 of the money to a family in Vinton that lost everything -- the mother has multiple sclerosis and an autistic child.

“I don’t know about you, but this storm hasn’t ended for me, yet,” Daniel said. “There is still a lot of storm recovery. And God says, ‘I am with you.’”

Noting that God is provider and sustainer, Daniel said the Lord has shown up at the church in recent days through a \$500 gift card, bags of ice, and an envelope full of money. “Still, God shows up.”

Having driven thousands of miles to help other churches that faced similar disasters, Daniel said, “A lot of that is coming back to us. God is

See FBC VINTON, page 11

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# NAMB officials say state leaders' complaints are flattering

**By Will Hall**  
 Message Executive Editor

ALPHARETTA, Ga. (LBM) – The three officers of the North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention have casually dismissed a list of concerns about a lack of partnership – views expressed by six state executive directors who stated specific complaints in a Aug. 12 letter to Kevin Ezell, NAMB president, and his trustees, and to the SBC Executive Committee and its president, Ronnie Floyd.

Five Western and one Midwestern state convention leaders wrote that chief among their issues was the unilateral approach NAMB has taken with state conventions outside the South with regard to NAMB's new Strategic Partnership Agreement.

Randy Adams (Northwest Baptist Convention), Bill Agee (California Southern Baptist Convention), Joe Bunce (Baptist Convention of New Mexico), Randy Covington (Alaska Baptist Resource Network), Jack Kwok (State Convention of Baptists in Ohio) and Chris Martin (Hawaii-Pacific Baptist Convention), were unanimous in their view that "our longstanding partnerships with NAMB may finally be coming to an end in any meaningful sense."

A news report on that letter can be accessed using the link, [baptistmessage.com/six-state-execs](http://baptistmessage.com/six-state-execs).

The Aug. 17 reply from NAMB officers, Danny de Armas, chairman and associate pastor, First Baptist Church, Orlando, Florida, Eric J. Thomas, vice chairman and pastor, First Baptist Church, Norfolk, Virginia, and William L. Rice, second vice chairman and pastor, Calvary Baptist Church, Clearwater, Florida, was dismissive.

"You have correctly identified that we are more focused (centralized) and directive in our strategies, personnel and funding," they wrote. "We're not sure you could make a



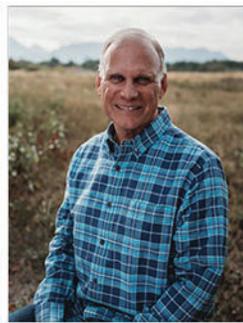
Randy Adams



Bill Agee



Joseph Bunce



Randy Covington



Jack Kwok



Chris Martin

more complimentary accusation of us!"

Continuing their defense of NAMB's unilateral approach to non-South state conventions, the three trustee officers implied concern about state use of the money in question, thus requiring a new agreement.

"We take seriously the task of being good stewards of the funds given to NAMB by SBC churches through the Cooperative Program and the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering."

#### A LOOK AT THE NUMBERS

NAMB has been under increasing scrutiny since Ezell took control in 2010.

It has enjoyed three record Annie Armstrong Easter Offerings in a row, with the last amounting to \$62 million. Additionally,

because Great Commission Resurgence recommendations were approved that included the dismantling of previous agreements with state conventions, NAMB controls \$50 million more each year in church planting funds – the amount previously spent through state conventions. Specifically, NAMB's church planting budget has surged from \$23 million to \$75 million per year in less than 10 years.

But, NAMB's record with regard to church planting, which is Ezell's preferred method for evangelism, has not followed the dramatic increase in finances.

According to data extracted from SBC Annals, in the 10 years prior to Ezell's arrival at the SBC entity, NAMB reported an average of 1,550 church

plants per year. However this annual number has dropped dramatically during Ezell's 10-year administration, with only 552 new churches started in 2019, the lowest number on record -- and not all of these were funded by NAMB.

Ezell has said publicly that the comparison is unfair because, he alleges, reporting about church plants was not accurate before he instituted new controls. He also has made public presentations in

which he repeatedly said that he warned Southern Baptists "when quality went up" because of his new system "quantity would go down."

Despite the budgetary windfall, under his leadership this Southern Baptist domestic mission agency has experienced the four worst years of church planting numbers in half a century – in the last four years.

See NAMB, page 10

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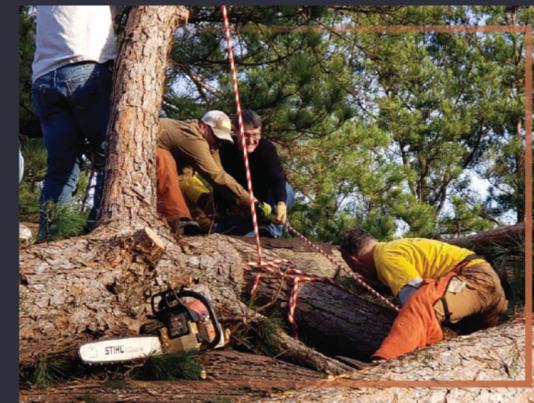
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# Trinity from page one

tons of food and other life necessities, and sharing the gospel.

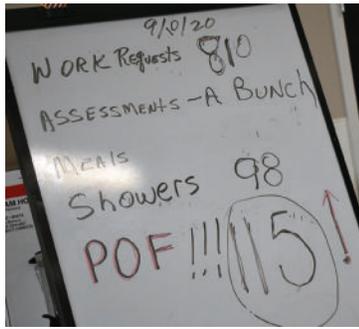
As of September 17, the site had registered 152 professions of faith.

Food, cleaning supplies, personal hygiene items, diapers, paper towels, pallets loaded with cases of water, flashlights, bug spray, tarps are among the needs donated by church members and the community.

“Just about as quickly as we can get it, it empties out,” said Trinity member Amy Langley. “The halls are full right now, but by the time we leave today, it all may be gone.”

Amy’s husband Keith is Trinity’s director for buildings and grounds.

“Donations to this ministry have been just as intense as the hurricane — even more,” said one worker who preferred



This whiteboard of DR statistics notes the most important stat of all, Professions of Faith (POF).

anonymity.

“The people share their stories as we help them, and that gives us the chance to pray with them and offer them the hope of Jesus. Just make them feel like they’re loved and that we’re walking alongside of them,” said Amy, who is on vacation from her job as a pharmacist. “When we meet a spiritual need, then meeting that need is much bigger than the physical.”

Chad Gilbert, associ-

ate pastor of community ministries and missions at Trinity said, “I’m running a marathon at a sprint’s pace. And these first two weeks have been like, crazy. There’s a desperation that’s in the air for everybody. It’s catastrophic.”

Gilbert coordinates site relief efforts, including people from other churches who are not Disaster Relief trained personnel, but who have the “heart and hands” for ministry.

See TRINITY, page 13

# NAMB from page 7

For the record, in 2013, Ezell set a goal of planting 1,500 new churches each year. Three years later, he lowered the bar to 1,200 church plants, annually. He revised the goal to start 750 congregations in 2019, which he missed by 198, or 26 percent, of the lowered expectation.

## STATE EXECS RESPOND

The six state executive directors replied Aug. 24 to NAMB’s Aug. 17 response, saying they appreciated the reply.

However, they did not back down from the ac-



Norm Miller photos

Chad Gilbert (R), community and missions pastor for Trinity Baptist Church, Lake Charles, prays with a storm victim, Sept. 11. Hurricane Laura ripped through the city of 78,000, Aug. 27, with winds of up to 150 mph. Two weeks after Laura ravaged the area, Gilbert said, “There’s a desperation that’s in the air for everybody. It’s catastrophic.”

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LOUISIANA BAPTIST FOUNDATION

cusations made in their original letter. “After years of attempting to build a healthy partnership with NAMB, we are attempting to find a way to rebuild a partnership with NAMB based on mutual respect and fruitful cooperation,” they wrote. “That said, we are disappointed with the NAMB trustees’ response as it further illustrates the breakdown of the relationship and partnership.”

Moreover, the state leaders questioned “whether all Cooperative Program funds are being spent in a manner consistent with the charter of the North American Mission Board and its ministry assignment given by the Convention.”

Similarly, the men asserted that the new NAMB document embodied “a fundamental misunderstanding over the very nature and roles of state conventions and NAMB,” adding a warning that NAMB’s actions threatened the current and future health of the Cooperative Program, Southern Baptists’ primary channel for funding cooperative missions and ministries.

The six state leaders have asked the SBC Executive Committee to mediate the situation with NAMB. In their Aug. 24 response to NAMB, which also was addressed to the SBC Executive Committee, they asked the “Executive Committee to fulfill its Bylaw 18E responsibility and to act expeditiously to help reach a resolution over these concerns, especially before the October 1st (sic) deadline for signing these new ‘Cooperative Agreements.’”

SBC Bylaw 18 pertains to the SBC Executive Committee; and, paragraph E(5) in this passage instructs them “To act in an advisory capacity on all questions of cooperation among the different entities of the Convention, and among the entities of the Convention and those of other conventions, whether state or national.”

# Disaster Relief efforts foster racial unity

By Will Hall  
 Message Executive Editor

ALEXANDRIA, La. (LBM) – While racial tensions continue to claim national headlines, the multi-state disaster relief response to one of the largest hurricanes ever to make landfall in the country is serving as an opportunity to build goodwill between ethnic groups in storm-affected parts of Louisiana.

Hurricane Laura came ashore in the state with 150 mph winds and maintained its ferocity far inland, with tropical storm winds of 50 mph, gusting to 85 mph, recorded in Alexandria, about 130 miles north from where the eye of the storm struck the coast. The winds knocked out power to

579,000 homes and businesses in the state, but the total devastation in terms of lost homes and businesses has not yet been tallied.

In Central Louisiana, comprising 10 parishes, Louisiana Baptist Disaster Relief, alone, has received 900 calls for help regarding damaged homes and property during the first week after the storm. The enormous response, especially by a predominately white Southern Baptist Disaster Relief organization, has alleviated many physical needs, but it also has brought some racial healing.

**MAGNOLIA STATE CONVERT**

Bob Thomas, a member of Highland Baptist

Church in Senatobia, Mississippi, experienced a moment of grace and growth on Saturday morning, Sept. 5.

He and his wife, a white couple, are damage assessors with Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief, and on their first deployment in this role.

“We knocked on the door and Bev began walking around the house,” he recounted, adding that they had called ahead so the family would be expecting them.

“A black lady came out and we began to talk about what needed to be done,” Thomas said. “After a while she said, ‘I need to tell you something. I don’t mean to embarrass you, but you need to hear this.



A grandmother giving care to eight grandchildren and who had suffered house damage from Hurricane Laura said she just wanted “that people would love each other” when asked by Jeff Free, a member of Kentucky Baptist Disaster Relief, about her prayer needs. She then had all the children join hands with her and the chainsaw team to pray.

I grew up in Louisiana and have lived here all my life, and people always tell me “Don’t ever trust anybody from Mississippi, especially white folk.”

“She said, ‘I don’t mean to hurt anybody by it. But

just wait. Now I can tell them that a white guy from Mississippi came and helped me – that we were going through this hard time — and that they were wrong,” he said, recalling her renewed hope.

## FBC Vinton from page one

saying, ‘Now watch what I can do.’”

College friends have called offering help, and, checks are coming in the mail. “One woman sent a \$1,000 check to us just because she had seen me preaching online,” Daniel said.

When asked why he chose the Isaiah passage for a sermon text, Daniel said, “It’s what I needed to hear.”

Although he is “elbow deep” in pulling ceiling tiles down in his home, Daniel continues to pastor by checking on church members as he can, but confesses he is not able to minister now as often as he would want.

Daniel said he was both angry and frustrated because he could not get back to Vinton as soon after the storm as he wanted from Ponchatoula, where he and his family weathered the

storm with friends.

Saying that Vinton is like other communities, with strong and differing opinions about politics and religion, those opinions can fade. “These communities and pastors come together. I’ve been called by pastors of other denominations who are checking on me. We’re making sure everybody’s needs in the community are met.”



Norm Miller photo

Despite extensive damage to the church, combined with sweltering 100 degree temperatures, FBC Vinton Pastor Bobby Daniel held worship services on the church grounds Sept. 13 to 40 people

**BLUEGRASS PRAYERS**

Jeff Free, a member of Buck Creek Baptist Church in Calhoun, Kentucky, and a white volunteer with Kentucky Baptist Disaster Relief, said there were three girls outside the house (an African American home) who started jumping up and down and clapping as he and his wife, Sandy, drove up with a chainsaw team.

See UNITY, page 14

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**LOUISIANA BAPTIST Children’s Home & FAMILY MINISTRIES**

# Biden from page one

dential candidate Donald Trump came to Louisiana just days after the August floods (at that time, the worst natural disaster in the nation since Hurricane Sandy hit the United States four years earlier), and he even made a personal dona-

tion to the relief effort.

However, his opponent, former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton continued with her fundraising soirees in the tony Hamptons of New York, sending a social media note, instead, that she was “closely monitoring” the situation. Her campaign promised she would visit the victims “at a time when the presence of a political campaign will not disrupt the response.” But Louisianans are still waiting.

Now President Trump, running for reelection, has again prioritized getting help to the state, visiting just two days after Hurricane Laura’s landfall.

Meanwhile, his opponent, former Vice President Joe Biden, has issued a statement saying, “we will come back and we will be there to help you build back better.” Biden had campaigned in New Orleans in March.

The problem with com-

ing here later is that Louisiana’s storm victims need help, now!

President Trump’s visit put a spotlight on our plight if even only for that day.

Since then, the wildfires in California get nightly news coverage with videos of flames licking the air at night. The riots in Portland and New York are highlighted in regular front page headlines and prime space online. But the devastation wrought by Hurricane Laura in Louisiana is old news to most news and information channels,

receiving bare mention by liberal or conservative pundits, alike.

Louisiana needs the attention that would be garnered by a Biden visit. The enormous press corps that follows him could give us a needed boost in the arm with regard to the message that “We need help, and a lot of it.” But, Louisiana is considered a red state, although our largest cities – New Orleans and Baton Rouge – are heavily blue. Campaigning here is “no win” for him, despite it being a big win for our people. He is facing tight races

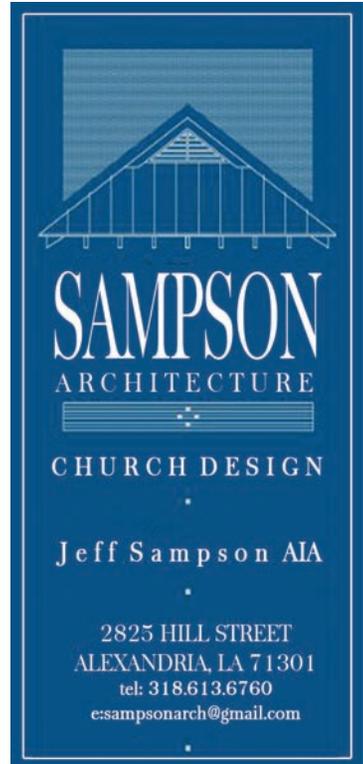
in battleground states.

Don’t get me wrong. I don’t care about the politics of it. I just want the media to refocus on the needs of so many in our state.

I don’t carry a rabbit’s foot, throw spilt salt over my shoulder or avoid stepping on sidewalk cracks.

But, I hope Joe Biden is superstitious – and that he sees Hillary’s snub of Louisiana and her subsequent loss to Trump in 2016 as a warning sign.

If not, my prayer is that he has common sense enough to know the time to help is now!



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# Triumph from page one

demic had cut short the baseball season for her two sons, which was a weekend passion for the family.

But when Hurricane Laura made landfall Aug. 27, it destroyed LeDoux’s home in Lake Charles, and she finally felt hopeless and helpless. Laura was the last straw, and she was a broken person, emotionally.

However, a visit to Trin-

ity Baptist Church on Sept. 4 changed her life: She is one of 152 storm victims who have turned to Christ at Trinity Baptist during the aftermath of Laura through Sept. 17.

“She had continued to express how she didn’t know where else to turn,” Morelock told the Baptist Message. “After a time of listening I told her there is no way to return to how things were but she had a hope. I asked if she had placed her faith in Christ and after a conversation she accepted the Lord.

“She was broken and tearful before coming to the church,” continued Morelock. “Now, she has a bright future and a reason to live.”

LeDoux has since begun the process of connecting with Trinity Baptist to grow in her faith and plans to follow through with baptism at a later date.

Morelock said while clearing debris off homes, offering showers to residents and feeding thousands of people a day are vital, salvations are para-

mount to the mission of disaster relief.

“We have a very strong emphasis as individuals and a group to show the love of Christ through not only actions but words,” Morelock said. “Many come simply seeking physical relief, and we meet many needs, without strings attached. But we also give them spiritual relief. It goes deeper than water or a hot meal. It’s who we are as Southern Baptist Disaster Relief.”

Stan Statham, a consultant with Louisiana Baptist Disaster Relief and associational missions strategist for Baptist Associations of Southeast Louisiana, added that chaplains are among hundreds who are sharing Christ to the many individuals searching for hope amid a crisis.

“It is great to see pastors serve as disaster relief chaplains,” he said. “All of the chaplains serving in Hurricane Laura relief efforts are making a huge difference by sharing the Gospel, praying with people and doing simple acts of ministry.”

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Brian Blackwell photo

## Gifts come in, go out to help churches destroyed by Laura

Jeannie Saylor and Jill Morrow, who work for Louisiana Baptists in the central mission office in Alexandria, prepare letters with checks to send to 36 congregations whose facilities were destroyed by Hurricane Laura.

The emergency gifts were possible because of donations to the Georgia Barnette State Mission Offering as well as funds given by state convention partners in the South, special offerings from churches and contributions by individuals.

Steve Horn, executive director of the

Louisiana Baptist Convention, said that at the appropriate time he will publicly thank those who made these emergency gifts possible. But he offered an anecdote to the *Baptist Message* as a way to describe the kindness, generosity and sacrifice that is befitting the whole of the effort to help these churches.

“One elderly lady called her pastor to indicate that though she did not have much to give, she had to do something,” he shared. “When that pastor arrived, that which she described as ‘not much’ was \$10,000.”



Norm Miller photo

Jerry Parmentier hugs Gregory White after loading a donated generator in the back of White's vehicle.

## Trinity from page 10

Jerry Parmentier joined Gilbert in loading a small, donated generator in the back of Gregory White's vehicle. White, a lung cancer survivor, had no electricity to power required medical equipment

at his home.

Parmentier, associate pastor for children's ministry, told White, “Sir, you made my day.”

White hugged Parmentier.

Gilbert led the trio in prayer.

“Mr. White is one of those bright spots we look for in days like these,” Parmentier said, reflecting on the day's heartache and hubbub.

“God wires most men to want to fix things,” Parmentier said. “We're not always able to do that. But today, I saw hope come back into a helpless situation.”



Parker Breux (6), a Trinity member, shared meals and hope, “We'll be praying for you.”

CHURCHES HELPING CHURCHES



In the aftermath of Hurricane Laura, many of our Louisiana Baptist churches have suffered damage which will significantly impact their ability to minister in their communities.

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## FEMA GRANTS

### CHURCHES MAY APPLY FOR FEMA GRANTS

FEMA Public Assistance grants are open to Houses of Worship located within presidentially-declared disaster areas (Allen, Beauregard, Calcasieu, Cameron, Jefferson Davis and Vernon Parishes) and typically reimburse 75 percent of eligible costs for **Permanent Work**—repair, replacement or restoration of certain disaster-damaged facilities.

Houses of Worship must have in excess of \$3,300 of damages related to Hurricane Laura; produce an IRS nonprofit letter; and, must have received insufficient funding or no funding after applying for a Small Business Administration disaster loan, [www.sba.gov/disaster](http://www.sba.gov/disaster).

Time is of the essence (**deadline: 9/27/2020**), and Houses of Worship do not have to wait for an SBA decision to apply to FEMA, [www.LouisianaPA.com](http://www.LouisianaPA.com).

Houses of Worship may apply directly to FEMA for **Emergency Work**—debris removal and emergency protective measures (also 75 percent of eligible costs)—and an expanded area is eligible (Acadia, Grant, Natchitoches, Vermilion, Winn are eligible along with the six parishes above).

Call or write state FEMA contact Joe Costello, (225) 339-3724 or [joseph.costello@la.gov](mailto:joseph.costello@la.gov), for assistance or information.

### INDIVIDUALS MAY APPLY FOR FEMA GRANTS

Individuals in Acadia, Allen, Beauregard, Caddo, Calcasieu, Cameron, Grant, Jackson, Jefferson Davis, La Salle, Lincoln, Morehouse, Natchitoches, Ouachita, Rapides, Sabine, St. Landry, Union, Vermilion, Vernon, and Winn Parishes may apply for Housing Assistance related to needs resulting from Hurricane Laura:

- temporary rent or short-term lodging, temporary housing units, uninsured home repairs; and, replacement or complete rebuild of a permanent residence;

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- repair or replacement of damaged vehicles, expenses for moving items into temporary storage as well as other critical needs.

Use [disasterassistance.gov/DAC/CaptchaAccept.do](http://disasterassistance.gov/DAC/CaptchaAccept.do) to apply, or call FEMA for information or to register for assistance, **(800) 621-3362**.

Additionally, the U.S. Department of Labor offers hurricane survivors unemployment benefits and re-employment assistance. Visit [laworks.net](http://laworks.net), or call **(866) 783-5567**.



LOUISIANA BAPTISTS

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## Unity from page 14

"My wife looked at me and said, 'We've got to do something for this family,'" he shared. Earlier, they had been advised that the limb hanging on the roof was big and that the job might need to be assigned to another team with a lift.

After looking over the situation Thursday, Sept. 3, the team concluded they could not remove the

huge trunk using just the equipment they had with them.

"But we did what we could do. We cleaned the yard up, trimming back the large tree as high as we could reach. We also cleaned up the other debris in the yard and the backyard," Free continued.

"We always sign a Bible for each job we complete with all our names in it and identify the disaster we are responding to and

include "Kentucky Baptist Disaster Relief," he said. "So, we got ready to leave and I told her what we had been able to do. I gave her the Bible and asked her if we could pray with her.

"She was watching eight grandkids, and she said, 'Wait a minute,'" Free told the *Baptist Message*, "and she came back with every one of them. One was 18 months, there was a three- and a five-year-old - all the way up

to the oldest, a young man who looked about 14.

"I asked her, 'Is there anything we can pray for you?'" he said, and he was deeply moved by her reply. "All she said was, 'That people would love each other.'

"I was thinking: She is in a dire situation; the house was not in that great of shape; and, she had all these kids - and all she wanted us to pray was for people to love each other," Free said.

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Send résumé information to: First Baptist Church ATTN: Keith Post, 700 Bayou Drive, Tallulah, LA 71282.

**SEEKING A BI-VOCATIONAL PASTOR**

Sorrento Baptist Church in Sorrento, LA is seeking a bi-vocational pastor. Please mail résumés to Sorrento Baptist Church P O Box 192, Sorrento, LA 70778 or email to pastorsearch@eatel.net.

**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 FULL-TIME PASTOR**

Trinity Baptist Church in Oakdale, LA is seeking full-time pastor. Please send résumés to: Pastor Search Committee, P O Box 748, Oakdale, LA 71463.

**BI-VOCATIONAL PASTOR**

West St. Charles Baptist Church in Boutte, LA, is seeking a bi-vocational pastor

Please send your résumés to wscbcoffice@bellsouth.net

**SEEKING A BI-VOCATIONAL PASTOR**

Midway Baptist Church, P.O. Box 70, Converse, LA is seeking résumés for a bi-vocational pastor.

Contact information for résumés  
Linda Webb - 318-315-0332  
Email: webb386@bellsouth.net  
Address: 179 Joy Road, Converse, La 71419

**SEEKING FULL-TIME PASTOR**

Friendship Baptist Church in Pine Prairie, LA is Seeking a full-time pastor. Please send resume to Friendshipbaptistchurchpp@gmail.com

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**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.

**ON THE MOVE**

- **Weston Lindsay** was ordained on August 9 and is the new pastor at Pinehurst Baptist Church, Ball.
- **Stuart, wife Angie, Sasser** became the new pastor at Philadelphia Baptist Church at Horseshoe Drive, Alexandria on August 2.
- **Brad Delaughter** has resigned as pastor of Satsuma Baptist Church.
- **Brian Hevrin** has resigned as pastor of Ida Baptist Church to First Baptist Church Vega, Texas.
- **Joe Stutson** is the new pastor to Calvary Baptist Church, Slidell.

**HOMECOMING**

- Alto Baptist Church, Alto: **Homecoming**, Sunday, September 27, 10:30 a.m. Speaker: **Dianne Abraham will share her testimony.** Worship: **Brothers In Christ.** A barbeque lunch will be served following the service. Music Minister: Jay Ellerman. Pastor: Alan Miller.
- Wallace Baptist Church, Pelican: **Homecoming**, October 4, 10:30 a.m. Lunch will follow morning worship. Guest Speaker: **Mike Anderson.** The church, which is located at 5605 Hwy. 177, Pelican, LA, invites all to join them for a wonderful day of worship, memories and fellowship.

**REVIVAL**

- Pioneer Baptist Church, Pioneer: **Fall Revival**, October 3-7, Saturday, 6:30 p.m.,

Revival Kick-Off **Concert with Ben Waites** followed by a finger food fellowship. October 4, 10:45 a.m. and 5 p.m. Harvest Sunday/Revival with a fellowship meal after each service. Monday-Wednesday, 6:30 p.m. with a fellowship meal after each service. Evangelist: **M.J. "Mickey" Bounds, Bastrop.** Worship: **Ben Waites.** A Love Offering will be taken. There will be NO nursery provided. Pastor: Gary Wolfe.

- Bethel Baptist Church, Colfax: **Fall Revival**, September 27-30, Sunday 9:30 and 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. Monday-Wednesday, 6:30 p.m. Evangelist: **Philip Caples.** Pastor: Carl Gulde.
- New Hope Baptist Church, Elmer: **Revival**, October 11-14, Evangelist: **Sam Moore.** Pastor: Rob McLane.
- First Baptist Church, Haughton: **Harvest Sunday**, October 25. Evangelist: **Bill Britt.** Pastor: Gevan Spinney.

**IN REMEMBRANCE**

■ **Velma J. Dyer**, 78, of Farmerville passed away July 24. She was born in Alexandria and attended Emmanuel Baptist Church. After marrying Royce Dyer in 1963, the couple moved to Spartanburg, S.C. where they served in churches there as well as in Florida, Alabama, Georgia and Louisiana. An avid reader of Amish books, loved playing the piano and served as pianist at both Liberty Baptist Church and Mt. Ararat Baptist Church. Mrs. Dyer also taught children's music and Vacation Bible School for many years. A loving wife, mother and grandmother, Mrs. Dyer was preceded in death by her father, Eugene Pitre; and mother, Viola P. Tassin. Left to cherish her memory are her husband of 57 years, Royce Dyer; children, Tammy D. Shelley (J.B.), Phillip D. Dyer (Lisa M. Houle-Dyer) and Brian E. Dyer (Kristen Hake Dyer); grandchildren, Justin Shelley, Phillip Shelley (Maggie), Marcel D. Dyer and Gabriella M. Dyer; sister, Arlene P. Hovendick (Jim); brother, Danny Tassin (Winetta); and a host of other family and friends.

**REMEMBERING BRO. PAUL CARTER**

There aren't many people in this world who pass and the world feels like it's immediately a worse place because of their absence.

This was my first thought the day I got the call Paul Carter had stepped into eternity. "Preach", as he was known by those close to him, stepped into heaven while on a trip with his family to visit his son.

He was a family man, husband of 62 years to Mrs. Audie, a father second to none to his 3 sons, a minister of the gospel for 65 years, a mentor, a pastor, and a friend to all. He was an outstanding gospel preacher. I heard a funeral outline once that said "He Lived. He Loved. And He Left."

He pastored numerous churches in our area. He served in evangelism in states all over our country. God used him to start churches as near as Rocky Branch, La., and as far as Wasilla, Alaska. He served in various leadership roles in our state, our convention, and each association he was a part of during his pastorate.

He was also a commercial fisherman. This was how he often made his living pastoring bi-vocational Churches, starting new works, or in seasons of full time evangelism. He was a tremendous fisherman who fished for fun, fished for a living, and fished whenever and wherever his family would go on vacation. He had recently been honored in his home Parish as a "Union Parish Outdoor Legend" for his storied lifetime as a fisherman and an out-

standing outdoorsman.

His most cherished accomplishment was he was a child of the MOST HIGH GOD.

He could relate to people of any walk of life. He was a constant witness for Christ and a soul winner.

At 83 years old, he was still the highlight of the kid's ministry at his most recent Church, Conway Baptist Church in Marion, La. His leadership at Louisiana College, in the Louisiana Convention, and in the churches he pastored has left a legacy like few this world has ever known.

My connection to Bro. Paul began in 2007 when we met and he took interest in my ministry. He was a pastor's friend and an encourager to so many of his "preacher boys." I thank

God I was considered one of them. He will be forever missed.

Please remember Mrs. Audie and their family in your prayers. Due to Covid 19, the family had a private graveside service at the cemetery at Antioch in Farmerville, La. An incredible memorial service was held at His Church in Pineville, La. with Steve Speer on his birthday in June. Antioch Baptist Church in Farmerville, La. will be hosting a memorial service in his honor this fall. The date will be announced when plans are made.

-Bro. Rubin Weaver

Pastor of Antioch Baptist Church, Farmerville

Paid



**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.

CQN TPAQDP MJP APHVM QA MJP ZHVVPYDP, NJPC

WPVEV BCPN MJHM JRV JQED NHV IQKP MJHM JP VJQEUS

SPZHDM QEM QA MJRV NQDUS ECMQ MJP AHMJPD, JHYRCX

UQYPS JRV QNC NJRIJ NPDP RC MJP NQDUS, JP UQYPS MJPK

ECMQ MJP PCS.

WQJC MJRDMPPC:QCP

Clues:  
S = D; R = I

Answer to August 27 Scripture Crypto:  
Acts twenty-eight: sixteen

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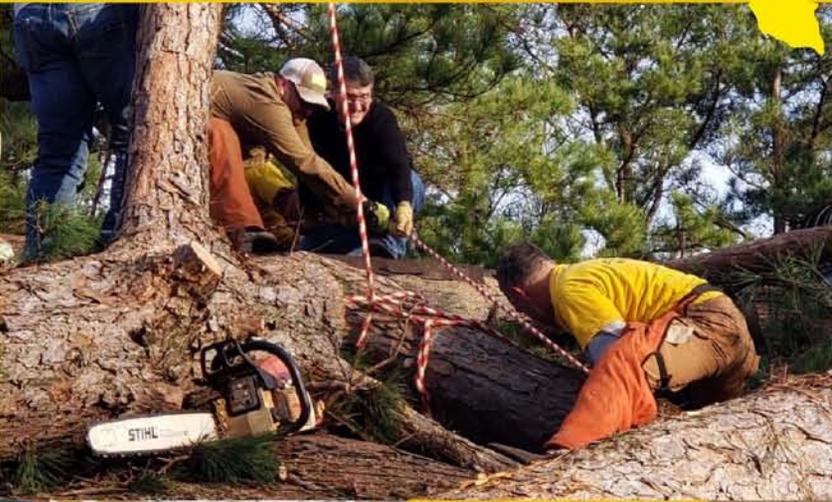
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# THANK YOU!

"...we can't help but thank God for you ..."

2 THESSALONIANS 1:3 (NLT)



" On behalf of all the people in Louisiana, thank you for your presence, assistance and prayers following Hurricane Laura's landfall. Cooperation is indeed a marvelous and powerful thing to observe."

*Steve Horn*

Executive Director,  
Louisiana Baptists

