

*"But our citizenship is in Heaven.
And we eagerly
await a Savior from
there, the Lord
Jesus Christ ..."*

– Philippians 3:20 (NIV)

BAPTIST Message

Newsjournal for Louisiana Baptists

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Submitted photos

(Left) Steve Ostrander, youth pastor at Northside Baptist Church in Montgomery, leads a devotional before classes begin at Verda Elementary School. (Right) Students pray together after a youth-led worship service at Northside Baptist Church.

Baptism service ignites revival at New Hope

BY BRIAN BLACKWELL
Message Staff Writer

MONROE – The front lawn of New Hope Baptist Church in Monroe was the scene for a special baptism service last August that served as a visible witness for friends and family, and also for motorists who passed by.

One by one, each of the nine new believers stepped into a horse trough filled with cold water on a hot summer Sunday afternoon, to publicly restate his or her individual faith in Christ by being baptized.

"Everyone was gathered together, singing praises to the Lord for all the things He did that day," said Gray, winner of the 2017 Exemplary Bi-vocational Pastor of the Year for the North region. "It was really cool for people to pass by and see what was going on -- to see entire generations baptized together, from age 10 to 65, was something I never will forget."

The baptism service signifies a personal revival New Hope Baptist has experienced since Gray's arrival in April 2017.

When Gray became pastor of New Hope Baptist, the Sunday morning worship service attendance averaged 30 and baptisms were a rarity, according to church records. Eleven months later, attendance for worship services has more than tripled, and 16 new converts have participated in baptism.

"The people here were so hungry for the Word," said Gray, who previously served as pastor of Harmony Baptist

Youth movement stirs growth at Northside

BY BRIAN BLACKWELL
Message Staff Writer

MONTGOMERY – Micheal Young once spent his free time enjoying the ways of the world, but a visit to a youth meeting at Northside Baptist Church in Montgomery transformed the high schooler into a Christ-follower on fire for the Lord.

"I went for a girl at first, but when I got to the church the Lord spoke to me,"

said Young, who was baptized the Sunday after his conversion in October. "Before I started going to church, I would get into mischief every weekend and bully people. Now, the Lord has touched me and I have a testimony of a person who has given up the bad ways of his past life to live a reborn life."

The change in Young's life even inspired his brothers, Aaron and Jacob, and his cousin, Jeremiah, to repent of their sins and turn their lives over to Christ in

the ensuing months.

"My family and I talked and shed a bunch of tears," Young said. "It feels great knowing I am able to help someone get out of a bad situation by offering them real hope found in Jesus."

Baptisms of students like Young have not been the exception but the norm recently at Northside Baptist Church. Since 2016, 78 new converts – many

See **NORTHSIDE** on 2

LBC pastors help defeat alcohol permit for local movie theater

BY STAFF
Baptist Message

ALEXANDRIA (LBM) – Philip Robertson and Clay Fuqua, senior pastor and campus pastor for Philadelphia Baptist Church in Deville and Alexandria, respectively, led a host of local pastors and community leaders in testifying before the City of Alexandria

Alcohol, Beverage and Drug Abuse Commission to oppose an alcohol beverage permit to the Grand Theatre of Alexandria – and won.

The movie theater had applied to serve low and high alcohol content drinks at its 14 screen facility as a means to improve profits and avoid closing in light of changing movie-going habits of the

public.

Its representatives also argued that it operated other movie theaters in the state that served alcohol and did so "without a single incident."

But its representatives admitted, when asked, that it was operating profitably now with ticket and concession

See **THEATER** on 8

See **REVIVAL** on 5

Senator Bill Cassidy to keynote LC's 163rd Commencement

BY NORM MILLER
LC News

PINEVILLE (LCNews) – Louisiana College's 163rd Commencement will confer more than 200 degrees on May 5 at the Rapides Parish Coliseum. The 10 a.m. event features U.S. Sen. Bill Cassidy as keynote speaker. "The Louisiana College family is delighted and



Sen. Bill Cassidy

honored for Sen. Cassidy to keynote what will be a memorable commencement for all attending," said Rick Brewer, president of Louisiana College. "As a physician, teacher, statesman, Christian leader, and family man, Sen. Cassidy embodies the kind of heart and mind that we attempt to cultivate in our students as we live out our Vision of Preparing Graduates and Transforming Lives."

THREE TO RECEIVE DSA

At the request of LC's trustees, three distinguished service awards will be presented.

Recipients are: Argile Smith, former interim president; Cheryl Clark, Vice President for Academic Affairs; and Randall Hargis, Executive Vice President and CFO.

"I applaud the sentiment behind these awards and agree with our trustees that Drs. Smith and Clark and Mr. Hargis have rendered superlative service to the College that merits such recognition," Brewer said.

Continuing a tradition inaugurated by Brewer, several students will share aspects of their Louisiana College experience with attendees.

STUDENTS SUGGEST USING COLISEUM FOR COMMENCEMENT

The Rapides Parish Coliseum was suggested by students after school officials planned to hold commencement exercises at one venue and then another.

"It seems our plan to train students in analytical reasoning, critical thinking, and problem solving is paying dividends," Brewer said.

"Our basketball teams played several games at the Coliseum this season,"

Brewer continued, "and we are glad to return there for this special event. Since we have moved to only one graduation service per year, the 8000-seat site is a great choice."

Brewer said the Coliseum

would be considered for future commencement exercises. LC's Guinn Auditorium renovation necessitated using another venue for commencement but is projected for a July completion.

Northside from page one

who are youth – have stirred the baptistery waters there. The baptisms have reflected a growth in its Sunday morning worship services, expanding from 60 in 2014 to 125 now. Sunday school attendance has also increased significantly during that time span, from 36 in 2014 to nearly 100.

Pastor Scott Tilton said the congregation's spirit of prayer and desire to reach others for Christ drew him to accept the call at Northside Baptist Dec. 15, 2016.

"Every time we came here to visit before we came here officially, there was this feeling of freedom and God moving," Tilton said. "When we came that first Sunday and saw two youth baptized, we were simply amazed at how Christ was moving in a church that didn't even have a

pastor at the time."

A HOUSE OF PRAYER

Prayer is a spiritual discipline the congregation does not take lightly.

Before Sunday school begins each week, men from the church gather at the altar and pray for at least 30 minutes. During its Monday night and Wednesday evening Bible studies, the men and women pray together for a mighty move of the Holy Spirit.

The church also keeps a lengthy list of prayer concerns for the government, military and others in the community and beyond who need God's intervention, protection and wisdom.

"You stay on that prayer

See NORTHSIDE on 3

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list, regardless if you are doing wonderful or in a bad situation," Tilton said. "When we put your name on that list, you are there until God takes you from this life. I'm convinced the one thing we do the least amount of that's one of the most important things is communication with God."

Church leaders are planning future prayer services, and hope to even open the doors for members to pray for a continuous 24-hour period.

"Prayer is the most important thing we do here, and I stress that on a regular basis," Tilton said. "It's nothing for me to stop in the middle of a sermon and ask someone to stand and pray. If we don't stay in communication with the general, we're going to lose the battle. We're fighting a war here. It's imperative we know what the general wants and what the general is thinking. He is the victor in this battle. We are in the trenches. We are the ones fighting. It's important we stay in contact with our God."

IMB presidential nominations accepted through May 15

By JULIE MCGOWAN
IMB Communications

RICHMOND, Va. – The International Mission Board's Presidential Search Committee is accepting nominations for the agency's next president.

The committee, chaired by Chuck Pourciau, pastor of Broadmoor Baptist Church in Shreveport, released the following statement April 12, 2018:

The International Mission Board Presidential Search Committee has benefited greatly from your prayers and input during the early stage of this process. We continue to desire your help as we seek the person God has chosen to be the next leader of the IMB.

Currently, we are in the process of receiving nominations and will continue to accept nominations for the position through May 15, 2018. If God leads you to submit a nomination to the committee, please do so by emailing us at imbsearch@broadmoor.tv.

We covet your prayers until this task is done.

A MOVEMENT OF YOUTH

Tilton believes the youth are the church of tomorrow, and the congregation shares his passion for involving them in many areas of service at Northside Baptist.

Every two months, the youth lead the Sunday morning worship service. The youth also are encouraged to lead prayer, participate in the praise team and help take up the offering.

During Sunday morning Bible studies and Wednesday evening gatherings, the students are disciplined and challenged to reach their classmates for Christ – and the students have embraced the opportunity to play a part in seeing their friends come to a saving relationship with Jesus.

"The fact that our youth have Christ in their lives makes it much easier for them to deal with the struggles they face," Tilton said. "We invest in our youth, and try our best to instill in them the Word of God. We teach them what they need to do

battle with Monday morning when they go to school.

"We have youth from our church who really are taking a hold of this," he continued. "They get the bull by the horns and they press forward. We are trying to teach our young people what they will need, and, disciple them to carry the Gospel to the football field and classroom."

Youth Pastor Steve Ostrander attests to the Holy Spirit's movement among his students.

When he first came to Northside Baptist, they averaged just five to six students, but the youth group grew quickly to as many as 40 attending each week.

Now, Ostrander leads devotionals at Northside High on Wednesdays, Verda Elementary on Thursdays and Colfax Elementary on Fridays before school begins.

Ostrander said establishing a good rapport with students has helped the adult leaders better connect with the youth on a deeper spiritual level.

"My number one goal is to have the Holy Spirit move in these kids and have it become contagious at home," he said. "I praise God for allowing those kids to be able to come.

"There are lives being saved," he said. "When an individual comes to the altar and says I have been living for the world and now Jesus is in my heart, it's an awe-



Submitted photo

Students from Northside Baptist Church form a circle in front of a bank in Montgomery during a prayer walk at the town's Bon Dieu Falls Festival.

some Holy Spirit moment. I tell them let's get caught up in God's word. These are students who crave the

Bible and want others to know that Jesus can do the same thing in their lives that He did for them."

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ERLC's MLK50 offered laments, calls to repent to mark King's death

MEMPHIS, (LBM) –The Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention partnered with The Gospel Coalition, a fellowship of evangelical churches in the Reformed tradition, to host a tribute to Martin Luther King, Jr., in Memphis on the 50th anniversary of his death.

Russell Moore, president of the ERLC and a member of TGC Council, headlined a diverse group April 3-4 that included noted author and Bible teacher Beth Moore as well as civil rights activist John Perkins and spoken word artist Jackie Hill-Perry among the 75 or so personalities who gave keynote remarks, led panel discussions or gave brief talks.

Leading up to the event, Moore released a statement explaining the need for the conference in terms of a sense of urgency to remind “the conscience of the church” to pursue racial unity in the midst of tremendous tension.

“Fifty years after Dr. King’s assassination, it is shameful that the church often lags behind the culture around us when it comes to issues of racial justice, unity and reconciliation,” Moore said. “We should be leading the way.”

The two-day conference in-

cluded laments; calls to repent, to pay the price for unity, for racial diversity in the Southern Baptist Convention; and, even the unveiling of a “hymn” by The Village Church in the Dallas-Fort Worth area repudiating “broken systems” and “microaggressions” that perpetuate notions of racial inferiority about minorities.

Baptist Press provided extensive coverage of the event, including the following excerpts from their reports:

CALL TO REPENT

Moore began the ERLC, TGC co-sponsored event with a lament.

Many evangelicals of King’s day, he said, embraced segregation. And in doing so, they betrayed Jesus’ teaching.

“Time and time again in the white American Bible Belt,” he said, “the people of God had to choose between Jesus Christ and Jim Crow—because you cannot serve both. And tragically many often chose to serve Jim Crow and rename him Jesus Christ.”

Today, Moore said, many Christians still are more formed by the culture than by the Bible. Churches remain segregated and divided. And Christians still fail to live up to Jesus’

teaching.

That has to change, he says. “The answer is not to re-brand but to repent,” he said.

LAMENTS

Matt Chandler, lead teaching pastor of The Village Church [and president of Acts 29, a Calvinist church-planting network], asked for the Holy Spirit to “break our hearts for our blindness and our hardness of heart and our foolishness.”

“Will You allow Your church to see the pitiful state of things so that we might repent ... [with] the kind of gut-level heart-brokenness that understands that we have made a mess and only You will be able to clean up that mess?” he said.

Moore acknowledged in his prayer that many at the conference are members of Christian denominations that were formed in defense of slavery.

“Father, Lord, would you have mercy on us, sinners?” Moore prayed. “Lord, would you give us a sense of brokenheartedness, a sense of lament, a sense of repentance, but not the sort of repentance that leads only to despair, [but] the sort of lament and the sort of repentance that causes us to cry out, Abba Father?”

Collin Hansen, TGC’s editorial director, prayed, “Oh Lord, in this country, we have gone astray. Fellow white Americans and I have turned to our own self-interests.

“Plead for us, Lord Jesus, transgressors against Your will, transgressors so often against brothers and sisters of color,” he requested. “Lord Jesus, heal our strife-stricken land, these United States of America. Let



Baptist Press photo

ERLC President Russell Moore urges the evangelical church “not to re-brand but to repent” on racial justice issues during the MLK50 conference Tuesday (April 3) in Memphis.

justice begin with the household of God, and let a revival of justice and mercy begin with the household of God.”

A PRICE FOR UNITY

Veteran pastor Crawford Loritts, an African American pastor of a predominantly white church, said on the final panel of the conference the question is not so much, “Where do we go from here?” but “Why haven’t we gone from here?”

The need is courage, he said. “This issue is going to cost us.

“Are we willing to pay that price? Love is expensive, and commitment is expensive.

“And I think God is standing back and saying to the church: You all know what to do here. You really do know what to do,” said Loritts, senior pastor of Fellowship Bible Church in Roswell, Ga. “It’s the courage and will to do it and to be it and to pay that price.”

Chandler and other speakers pointed to the need for cross-ethnic relationships -- and not ones in which white Christians find African Americans who agree with them.

[H]e has a group of black fellow pastors who provide a “voice that I need to hear

because I do not know or understand,” Chandler said.

“If it weren’t for the ‘hanging-in-there-ness’ of my African American brothers and sisters, there would be no way forward for us as a white congregation.”

... Ignorance of history and the system is a problem for many white evangelicals, Chandler said in seeking to explain their inconsistencies on race issues.

“[T]hey don’t know what they don’t know, and they are part of a system that encourages their not knowing,” he said. “This ignorance has led to immaturity, and [immaturity] talks when it should listen, and it’s silent when it should speak. This immaturity has led either to hostility or withdrawal.”

Another problem is the slippery definition of “evangelical,” said TGC President Don Carson.

There are “millions of people who call themselves evangelicals who have never been born again; never really, truly trusted Christ; who don’t bow to the Lordship of Christ,” Carson said during the final panel discussion. “The statistical evidence for that is overwhelming.”

SBC SHOULD REFLECT DIVERSITY

Byron Day – president of the National African American Fellowship (NAAF) of the SBC and senior pastor of Emmanuel Baptist Church in Laurel, Md. -- said the [SBC’s] 1995 resolution [repenting of past racism and asking forgiveness from African Americans] “was great. It was wonderful. But what are you going to do with it?”

“At every level, we need to see the diversity of our convention,” he told the breakout session audience. “And there needs to be accountability.”

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Revival from page one

Church in Delhi from August 2013 to March 2017. “They got on fire when I came. My family and the church family came together and started appreciating what God was doing so much. It was and still is a move of God.”

MOVEMENT OF PRAYER

Gray credits prayer as a factor for the Holy Spirit moving in the hearts of the congregation.

Not long after he arrived at New Hope Baptist, Gray designated an area in the church building as a prayer room. He then established men’s and women’s prayer teams.

Gray said before God could revive the church, the congregation had to participate in a season of prayer.

“There is a huge untapped power in prayer,” he said.

“Prayer is a communication with God. Communication is essential for any relationship, and it’s not different with God. When you don’t communicate, you drift away from that relationship. We have to communicate with Him on a daily basis.”

Much like prayer moved the church to a deeper love for Christ and their community, it also was instrumental in Gray embracing his call to ministry in 2002.

During a visit in the office of the late Joe Senn – who died in 2016 while serving as pastor of Crockett Point Baptist Church in Crowville – the two men participated in a prayer session.

Among Gray’s prayer requests was regaining a passion for God he had as a young adult.

Senn responded by anointing Gray’s forehead with oil and praying God would change his heart.

“From that moment on, I was on fire for God,” Gray said. “Everywhere I went I wanted to tell them about the experience I had.”

“God called me into the ministry when I was younger, but I let several years pass before I was obedient to accept the call,” he continued. “I didn’t feel like I was the right fit and didn’t feel like I knew enough about the Bible. Looking back I knew it was a true calling but I put off being obedient.”

Though he didn’t pastor a church until nine years after his prayer meeting with

Senn, Gray began teaching Sunday school at Crockett Point Baptist. The leadership position provided Gray with valuable experience in the areas of discipleship and teaching the Bible.

Gray believed that when the time was right, God would call Him to serve as pastor of a church.

MOMENT OF MINISTRY

Gray preached his first sermon in 2011, after he received an invitation to supply the pulpit at West New Home Baptist Church in Holly Ridge. He soon assumed the role of interim pastor until Harmony Baptist Church in Delhi called him as pastor two years later.

“After the congregation asked me back that Sunday night, God provided a place for me to preach every Sunday from that day forward,” Gray said. “I preached and really started to love what God called me to.”

When he is not performing his duties at pastor of New Hope Baptist, Gray can be found patrolling the highways and bi-ways of Franklin Parish as a deputy sheriff.

While the job requires long hours and managing dif-



Members and guests gathered in August for a special baptism service at New Hope Baptist Church in Monroe. Pastor Scottie Gray baptized nine new believers from different generations, ages 10 to 65, during the service. The service represented a rebirth in the church itself. Since Gray became pastor of the church in April 2017, New Hope Baptist Church has seen its Sunday morning worship attendance triple, and has witnessed the baptism of 16 people. Gray credits prayer as a catalyst for the movement of the Holy Spirit within the congregation.

ficult, sometimes dangerous, situations, Gray is thankful how the job allows him to use the secular job as an av-

enue to show Christ’s love.

“I have the opportunity to minister everywhere I go,” he said. “God has been so

good that he’s given me a job where I take my pastoral gifts with me, right here in my own Jerusalem.”



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**TOURS ARE ESCORTED
FROM BATON ROUGE**

Cyclists' '1,000 Miles for a Mission' a ride of a lifetime

By JOHN MARCASE

Special to the Message

PINEVILLE -- What was supposed to be a 1,000 mile cycling trip for a growing ministry in Bossier City did not launch exactly as planned April 4.

Still, it did not prevent the group, consisting of men from Men of Courage Louisiana and the Christ Fit Gym in Bossier City, from seizing upon a ministry opportunity when it presented itself.

The "1,000 Miles for a Mission" trip had barely started when Christ Fit Gym owner Billy Weatherall suffered a malfunction with his bike.

"We were 20 miles out of Bossier and I had a blowout," Weatherall said. Later that night at First Baptist Church in Pineville he shared his testimony and the cycling group took part in a worship service. "It was the only one we experienced" that day.

But, it just so happened the blowout occurred near some railroad tracks where maintenance was being performed.

"There was a railroad worker who I knew and hadn't seen in years," said Weatherall. "He came over and said he had been going through a rough time and needed prayers."

"God has been using us like this all along the way."

Officially, the 1,000 Miles for a Mission ride is to raise funds for both Men of Courage and Christ Fit Gym. Both organizations operate from donations, and Christ Fit does



John Marcuse photo

Cyclists from Men of Courage Louisiana and Christ Fit Gym in Bossier City prepare to leave from First Baptist Church, Pineville, on the next leg of their '1,000 Mile for Mission' trip on April 4. Their goal was to glorify God, raise awareness about both groups and raise donations for their organizations by cycling 1000 miles -- a 100 miles a day -- before returning to Bossier City on April 13.

not even collect membership fees.

"It's a joint venture," said Men of Courage's Mark Rodie, who is a former men's minister at FBC Bossier. "We do a lot together with Christ Fit Gym."

In addition to the stop in Central Louisiana, the group planned overnight stops in Baton Rouge, New Orleans, Pascagoula, Miss., and Perdido Key, Ala. Then, re-tracing their stops and returning to Shreveport-Bossier on April 13.

"We are representing Christ and bringing a ton of Bibles," said Rodie. "In New Orleans, we'll be outside Café du Monde buying beignets and handing out Bibles."

"We like to do extreme things at the gym," said Weatherall. "We do these extreme things and it gives us a platform to glorify the Lord."

Extreme is a fitting word

to describe Weatherall's leap of faith that led him to establish Christ Fit Gym, and for Rodie to organize Men of Courage.

The night before the cycling trip began, Rodie's outfit held its monthly Man Church in the Shreveport-Bossier area. They meet the first Tuesday night of the month. Usually, between 300 and 350 men -- all men ages 12-120 are welcome -- and roughly 10 churches are represented.

Rodie said when a man reaches a decision to follow the Lord, there is a 93 percent chance the family will follow.

April's Man Church featured LSU football player J.D. Moore, American Idol contestant Garrett Jacobs and free crawfish. More than 700 attended and ate 2,600 pounds of crawfish.

As Rodie recounted the night's event during the wor-

ship service in Pineville, he had to stop, overcome with emotion. He received the bill from Shane's Catering and it was five figures.

Then, Rodie noticed the "Paid in Full" stamped on the bill.

During his testimony, Weatherall recounted a similar situation as he struggled to answer God's calling to open Christ Fit Gym and make it free to anyone who wanted to work out there.

Weatherall said shortly after opening the gym in 2012, he called a non-believer employee to his office and told the employee the rent was due, the gym was \$2,500 short and they needed to pray. When they finished, the two went to leave the office and a member of the gym was at the door and handed Weatherall an envelope containing \$2,500.

But, Weatherall said, that

was not the best part.

"That employee said he had seen a true miracle and 'I want to accept Christ,'" he said.

Since then, Weatherall noted Christ Fit, which started with a couple of friends joining him for a Bible study followed by workouts, has expanded six times. Its monthly budget has grown from \$5,000 to \$42,000. More than 7,500 people have come through the gym, which still begins each workout session with a Bible study -- and Christ Fit Gym still does not charge a membership or class fee.

"God operates on a whole different level than we do," he said.

It took a while for Weatherall to understand that.

Following his 2000 graduation from Airline High School in Bossier City, Weatherall joined the Army, continuing a history of men in his family serving in the military.

Just more than a year later, Weatherall was at Fort Drum in New York. Then, 9/11 happened. A week later, he and his company were en route to Afghanistan and several other tours would follow.

The atrocities of war led him to drugs and drinking and on the brink of suicide. Weatherall said he actually picked up a gun, ready to take his life when he noticed the camouflaged Bible first handed to him by a chaplain while on that plane to Afghanistan.

See 1,000 MILES on 10



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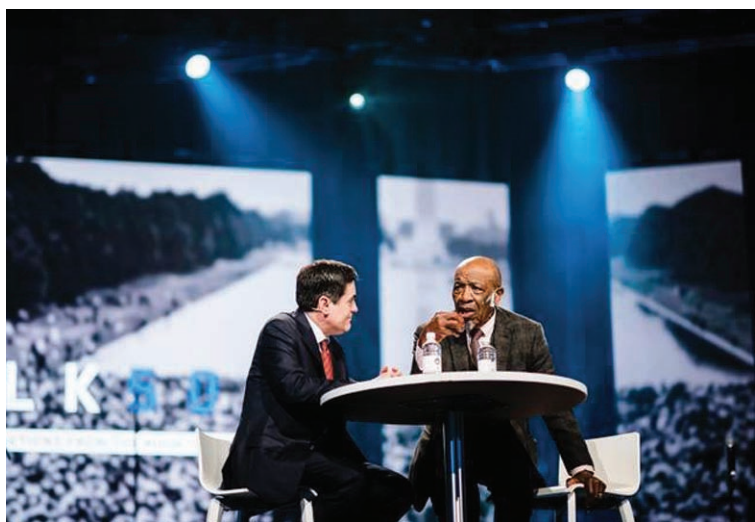
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Baptist Press photo

Longtime civil rights leader John Perkins talks about racial reconciliation during an interview with Russell Moore at the MLK50 conference Tuesday (April 3) in Memphis.

MLK50 from page 4

Regarding accountability, Day said the reports from the SBC's entities need to provide more detail on their diversity efforts.

Kevin Smith, executive director of the Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware, said, "I would love to continue to press past the 1995 resolution."

The SBC's committees and boards need to reflect the broad diversity of the convention, including Hispanics and Asians, said Smith, an African American. The diversity should include positions that make budget and hiring decisions, he said.

One of the messages he hears, Day said, is: "It's time to stop talking and start doing."

Vance Pitman, senior pastor of Hope Church in Las Vegas, Nev., told the audience "an apology one time does not in any way undo the tragedy of what was done."

"Sometimes white Southern Baptists say, 'Okay, we made our apology. Can we not move past that?'" Pitman said. "It's a gross misunderstanding of the severity of the issue that took place, and I think for that reason white Southern Baptists should be the kind of Southern Baptists that every time there's an opportunity to drive a nail into the coffin of racism every white Southern Baptist should be very quick to grab the hammer."

REACTION

Thabiti Anyabwile, a pastor at Anascotia River Church in southeast Washington, D.C., and a fellow TGC Council member with Russell Moore, expressed personal conflicts about the "celebration" of

the fiftieth anniversary of the assassination of Dr. King, posting an editorial April 4 on the official TGC website.

Anyabwile offered that "it's struck me as perversely curious to 'celebrate the fiftieth anniversary' as some put it," he said, adding that King "did not die peacefully in his sleep" but was murdered "violently and cruelly from the bullet fired from the .30-06 Remington Model 760, a bullet tearing through his cheek, breaking his jaw and vertebrae as it rifled through his spine."

Moreover, Anyabwile went further to state that the U.S. society was complicit with James Earl Ray in King's murder.

"I'm saying the entire society killed Dr. King," he said.

"I don't need all white people to feel guilty about the 1950s and 60s—especially those who weren't even alive," Anyabwile offered.

"But I do need all of us to suspect that sin isn't done working its way through society."

"Until this country and the Church learns to confess its particular sins particularly, we will not overcome the Adamic hostility that infects the human soul and distorts human potential," he said.

"My white neighbors and Christian brethren can start by at least saying their parents and grandparents and this country are complicit in murdering a man who only preached love and justice."

"If we're serious, then we can go on to commit ourselves to laying down our lives for others as Dr. King did. After all, the King of Kings said, 'Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends' (John 15:13)."

LBCH's Hancock: WMU WorldCrafts initiative to make significant impact

By ROBIN MCCALL

WMU Communications

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — WorldCrafts, the fair trade division of Woman's Missionary Union (WMU), has expanded an initiative that supports Southern Baptists' work for children and families through a partnership with Louisiana Baptist Children's Home & Family Ministries in Monroe.

The initiative, which was first launched with Alabama Baptist Children's Homes & Family Ministries and Arizona Baptist Children's Services & Family Ministries in January, supports the work of the Baptist Coalition for Children and Families. Through this initiative, churches or individuals partner with WorldCrafts to support at-risk children and to provide life-sustaining work for global artisans and their families.

"The new WMU WorldCrafts initiative for Baptist Children's Homes will make a significant impact on the lives of our children here in Louisiana," said Perry Hancock, President and CEO of the Louisiana Baptist Children's Home & Family Ministries.

"LBCH is one of the few children's homes across America that receives no government funding for the care of foster children. The new WMU project will help us expand our support of foster children both on campus in Monroe and across the state," he continued. "Most of all, we will be able to continue our work of providing love, care, and hope in Christ for children in need. Thank you WMU for meeting needs and changing lives at Louisiana Baptist Children's Home."

Currently more than 430,000 children are in foster care in the United States,

according to Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS), the Children's Bureau, Administration for Children and Families. Baptist children and family ministries serve this population through Christ-centered resources designed to protect foster children and to reunify families.

To support children served by local Baptist children and family ministries, churches or individuals can host a one month online WorldCrafts benefit. To begin the process of hosting a benefit, the benefit host will complete an online registration form.

Then WorldCrafts will create a unique promotion kit for the host, including a webpage, promotion code, media slides and sliders, social media images, and a bulletin insert. Twenty percent of all

See INITIATIVE on 8

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Theater from page one

sales. Likewise, they revealed that there have been some problems at the Alexandria location, which is dry, with underage youth sneaking in alcohol.

Interestingly, the Grand Theatre representatives also offered that most of its best attended features are family-friendly films that allow adults to bring their children with them to enjoy a night of entertainment.

Robertson raised this point in his comments to the Baptist Message, saying the victory with the Commission means "the theatre remains one of the last family friendly entertainment options in Cenla.

"Parents can continue to bring their teenagers and children without having to worry about all the possible problem issues that can be associated

with alcohol consumption," he said. "We are very grateful the local alcohol licensing commission heard our concerns, and those of the community, concerning the sale of alcohol in our only theatre."



Philip Robertson

Fuqua echoed these sentiments, offering that "the Grand is one of the last places in Alexandria where one can bring a family and have family entertainment without alcohol served. We were glad to see the council was wise in their decision in a 4-1 vote."

During his testimony to the Commission, Fuqua took issue with testimony suggesting the movie theater could not make it without adding alcohol sales.

"I owned a restaurant for 21 years in Marksville,"



Clay Fuqua

Fuqua testified. "I had a guy come to me and tell me you'll never sell catfish here without also selling beer. It's never going to work."

"We ended up as the No. 1 seafood seller in the parish. We would sell 21 cases of catfish a week, 15 pound cases," he declared. "God blessed my business because we did not serve alcohol."

In his comments to the Baptist Message Fuqua made it a point to underscore how important it was that people

of faith took a public stand at the hearing.

"I think if the Grand would have had more people on their side at the hearing it might have gone the other way. I am pleased with the crowd that showed up in support of this," he said. "This showed we can make a difference by coming together. We need to make more stands and say not on our watch. We may not win every time but we can make our voice heard. I can go to bed saying

I fought the good fight."

Will Hall, director of the Office of Public Policy for Louisiana Baptists, also testified before the commission, offering research about the negative impact on youth (underage drinking, binge drinking and problem drinking as an adult) of being exposed to positive imaging of alcohol consumption.

In comments to the Baptist Message, he reaffirmed Fuqua's observation about Christians getting involved in "public square" issues.

"The faith community did a wonderful job of putting out the word and getting people to attend the hearing," he said, "and it made the difference. Our side filled the Council Chamber, and only the lawyer, the spokesman and the general manager for the Grand Theatre spoke in favor of granting the permit."

"There are good men and women on the Commission and with our help they made a good decision to deny the movie theater's request."

Initiative from page 7

sales generated by the benefit will go directly to the host's selected Baptist children and family ministry.

Sandy Wisdom-Martin, executive director of national WMU, said this initiative to assist Baptist children and family ministries is a natural fit for WorldCrafts.

"Most faith communities are aware of the foster care crisis in our country," Wisdom-Martin said. "Many people have a desire to assist foster children, but don't know how or where to get started. This initiative through WorldCrafts can help create connections between churches and families and their local Baptist children and family ministry."

Like Baptist children and family ministries, WorldCrafts desires to bring grace and restoration to hurting people throughout the world.

WorldCrafts exists to develop sustainable, fair-trade businesses among impoverished people around the globe.

Its vision is to offer an income with dignity and the hope of everlasting life to every person on earth.

WorldCrafts encourages churches and individuals to partner with children and family ministries by

- Praying for their local Baptist children and family ministry.

- Supporting their local Baptist children and family ministry by hosting benefits and visiting WorldCrafts.org to learn how to raise awareness of their work in the community.

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U.S. Rep. Ralph Abraham, evangelist Rick Gage encourage CENLA pastors, politically, spiritually



Will Hall photo

U.S. Rep. Ralph Abraham updates pastors about current issues being dealt with in Congress.

BY WILL HALL

Message Editor

ALEXANDRIA (LBM)—During an April 9 morning meeting and luncheon at Philadelphia Baptist Church, Horseshoe Drive, U.S. Congressman Ralph Abraham and evangelist Rick Gage shared inspiring words with 33 local pastors and other leaders gathered to get some political insights from Washington, D.C. and the latest updates about #Hope4U2018, an area-wide evangelistic crusade slated for Cenla, October 14-17.

HOPE 4 CENLA

Gage told the crowd the leadership teams are coming together, and that discussions with the local school systems were well under way.

"The door has already been opened for us to speak in all of your high schools and all of your middle

schools," Gage shared regarding the On Track moral development program which covers issues like bullying, suicide and drugs and alcohol. But he emphasized the need right now is to "get your congregation to use their talents and gifts and callings to serve in this campaign.

Using the decision counseling team (trained individuals who meet one-on-one with persons who come forward) as an example, Gage said there are opportunities "for your people" to serve "that will enhance and strengthen your local fellowship!

"It's going to set their souls on fire and they're going to come back and be better church members for your congregation."

Gage closed by emphasizing the priority is still to "pray, pray, and pray," making a reference to Billy Graham's focus in putting together evangelistic crusades.



Will Hall photo

Evangelist Rick Gage offers some words of inspiration and gives pastors updates about #Hope4U2018, an area-wide evangelistic crusade slated for CENLA, October 14-17.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Congressman Abraham explained his vote for the budget authorization (which provided for the military and other essentials) and against the budget appropriations bill (which funds Planned Parenthood, among other concerns).

He also gave an update on Christian persecution around the world, saying, "900,000 Christians were killed last year ... and North Korea was among the worst" of the persecuting

countries that included Sudan, Yemen and Afghanistan.

Abraham also advised the crowd that mailing a letter was not a particularly effective way to contact Congress because the security protocols for checking postal mail before it is delivered leads to extended delays, etc.

"If you want to get our attention you need to send emails and make phone calls," he said. "You catch our attention when you contact us so much that you disrupt the business of the day."

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Symposium at Highland Baptist first step in addressing mental illness

BY STAFF

Baptist Message

NEW IBERIA – Pastor David Denton believes it is time to remove the stigma from mental illness and believes the church is a good place to start.

Pastor at Highland Baptist Church in New Iberia, Denton felt God's prompting after the Jeremiah Johnston study – "Unanswered: Lasting Answers to Trending Questions" – to address the issue of Christians and mental illness. This study was timely as several of his church members had been impacted by traumatic events associated with mental illness.

"I did some research and it shows 25 percent of our

population has or will be diagnosed with some form of mental illness," he said. "That affects a lot of people. There is no instantaneous fix but the issue needs to be addressed in a Christian worldview."

In order to do so, Highland Baptist will host a one-day, interactive event on mental health April 22.

The event's theme, "Hope for Mental Health," will begin Sunday morning as Kevin Richard, staff counselor at Trin-

ity Baptist Church in Lake Charles, will be casting some biblical light on the subject of mental illness at the 8 and 10:30 a.m. worship services.

The afternoon schedule begins at 4 p.m. in the church's fellowship hall with

a light meal and overview of "Christians and Mental Illness" led by Chris Van Dyke, Denton's brother-in-law and Chief Operating Officer of Wellstone, Inc., a mental health facility in Alabama.

The symposium's schedule also includes two breakout sessions at 4:45 and 5:45 p.m. and a break at 5:30.

Among the topics to be discussed – "Anxiety and Depression" led by Richard; "How to Talk to Someone in Crisis/Suicide: What Can We Do?" led by Van Dyke; "Living With A Person Who Is Mentally Ill" led by Jeremy Babb, a staff psychologist with Iberia Parish School Board and the 2017 Louisiana School Psychologist of the Year; and, "Meds vs No Meds: That Is the Question" led by Lindsay Nicholson, a licensed clinical social



Pastor David Denton

HOPE

for Mental Health

Sunday, April 22 ~ 4:00pm - 7:00pm

Fellowship Hall (Light meal provided)

<p>Kevin Richard, MA, NCC, LPC</p> <p>Breakout Session "Anxiety and Depression" Preaching at 8am & 10:30am</p>	<p>Chris Van Dyke, MA</p> <p>Breakout Session "How to Talk to Someone in Crisis/Suicide: What Can We Do?"</p>
<p>Jeremy Babb, SSP, NCSP</p> <p>Breakout Session "Living With a Person Who Has a Mentally Illness"</p>	<p>Lindsay Nicholson, MSW, LCSW</p> <p>Breakout Session "Meds vs No Meds: That Is the Question"</p>

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See SYMPOSIUM on 13

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1,000 Miles from page 6

He had never opened the Bible.

"I looked at that Bible and said, Lord, if you are real, I need you. And I need you in bad way," he said. "If you give me something to live for, I'll give you everything I've got. I'll give you every ounce. But, please save me."

Then he passed out.

The next day, a friend called and invited him to a Promise Keepers rally in Dallas and he turned his life over to Christ.

"I did not even know what a Christian man looked like," Weatherall admitted.

One week later, he was in Africa carrying Bibles to distribute. Only a year earlier he had been in Africa carrying weapons while on a deployment.

"I started to radically live for the Lord," he said. "I started to get into the Word of God."

Weatherall said his mission in life is now rather simple, but difficult to achieve for many.

"I may die while I'm on this bike mission run, but I know I'm gonna go to Heaven," he said. "That's the only thing in life I'm sure of. And while I'm living, I'm gonna take every opportunity I can to tell other people about Christ



Christ Fit Gym owner Billy Weatherall speaks at First Baptist Church, Pineville April 3.

because He is who He says He is.

"Be radical for Christ. He wants all of you. He can't bless you with just a little bit. He can't bless you if you just give him 90 percent of you. God wants all of you. When you fully surrender, then Christ can move in your life."

Even on a thousand mile bicycle journey.

Vieux Carre volunteers feel at home among homeless

BY BRIAN BLACKWELL

Message Staff Writer

NEW ORLEANS (LBM) -- Louisiana Baptist churches have come alongside the only Southern Baptist church in the New Orleans French Quarter to serve up food with the love of Christ on Friday afternoons.

Since 2013, First Baptist Church, Ponchatoula, and more recently, First Baptist Church, Norco, have sent teams to help prepare and hand out meals to as many as 70 homeless men and women who come inside Vieux Carre Baptist Church for what Pastor Tom Bilderback calls "Shower Fridays."

Bilderback said the Shower Fridays are a way to reach people who may be stepping into a church for the first time. Visitors often include drug dealers, satanic worshipers and homeless individuals.

"We share the Gospel and are there to practice what it means to be in the presence of Christ for the least of these," Bilderback said. "Once we offer them some food and a hot shower, we're able to then share with them hope found in Christ. Many times it will build bridges with those who may have come far from Christianity."

The homeless hear a Christian testimony from Bilderback or someone else who has overcome the hardships

that homeless people typically experience.

The first time can be a little intimidating for volunteers, Bilderbeck said. But more often than not, they grow to love the homeless and develop a passion for the mission of Vieux Carre Baptist Church.

"Everyone who comes has grown to love it," he said. "And once they come, they rarely miss again. A lot of these guys we minister to don't have their family or mother around, so it's become an amazing way for volunteers to love on them in a very practical way."

Volunteer Denny Badeaux, a member of First Ponchatoula, has seen God move in miraculous ways since he started volunteering in 2013 and he said the gestures of gratitude from the homeless are very rewarding.

"The Vieux Carre Baptist Church is such a blessing to us as well as the many lives it has impacted for Christ in the French Quarter," he said. "The actions of the church staff at the Vieux over the years have definitely impacted us on how to be more compassionate servants of Christ."

"God showed us how important it is to listened to Him and be obedient to His direction," he said. "About three-and-a-half years ago I felt God was leading us to cook for our friends without



Submitted photo

Members of First Baptist Church in Norco prepare sandwiches that are given to homeless attending Vieux Carre Baptist Church in New Orleans' French Quarter every Friday. Those attending also receive a hot shower and hear a testimony from someone who has overcome hardships that the homeless typically experience.

addresses consistently every month. I didn't see how we would be able to do that.

"However God was about to reveal His power and

gave us a mighty lesson," he continued. "After we committed to once-a-month cooking at the Vieux, a friend heard about our commitment and

told me he would supply 30 pounds of smoked sausage a month. We were so amazed

See VIEUX CARRE on 15



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EVENT

Executive Committee Office

DAY / DATE / TIME

Wednesday, June 6, 2018 @ 8:00 a.m.

LOCATION

Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center

EVENT

NAMB Church Revitalization & Replant Lab

DAY / DATE / TIME

Saturday, June 9, 2018 @ 5:30 p.m.

LOCATION

Criswell College

EVENT	DAY / DATE / TIME	LOCATION
NAMB Church Revitalization & Replant Lab	Sunday, June 10, 2018 @ 2:00 p.m.	AT&T Stadium
Woman's Missionary Union Missions Celebration Information	Sunday, June 10, 2018 @ 2:00 p.m.	Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center
Registration	Sunday, June 10, 2018 @ 3:00 p.m.	Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center
Prayer Center	Sunday, June 10, 2018 @ 4:00 p.m.	Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center
Text-Driven Preaching (SWBTS)	Sunday, June 10, 2018	Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center
Preschool Childcare	Sunday, June 10, 2018 @ 4:00 p.m.	Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center
Giant Cow Children's Ministries	Sunday, June 10, 2018 @ 6:00 p.m.	Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center
2018 SBC Pastors' Conference	Sunday, June 10, 2018	Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center
	Sunday, June 10, 2018 @ 6:00 p.m.	Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center

EVENT	DAY / DATE / TIME	LOCATION
Fellowship of Baptist World Ministries	Monday, June 11, 2018 @ 7:00 a.m.	Omni Dallas
Exhibits	Monday, June 11, 2018 @ 8:00 a.m.	Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center
Women's Expo	Monday, June 11, 2018 @ 8:00 a.m.	Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center
Pastors' Wives Session	Monday, June 11, 2018 @ 9:00 a.m.	Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center
Executive Committee Plenary	Monday, June 11, 2018 @ 10:00 a.m.	Omni Dallas
NAMB Send Luncheon	Monday, June 11, 2018 @ 11:30 a.m.	Omni Dallas
Clear Creek Bible College Alumni & Friends	Monday, June 11, 2018 @ Noon	Omni Dallas
Hispanic Fellowship of the SBC	Monday, June 11, 2018 @ 1:00 p.m.	Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center
Tea @ 3 (SWBTS)	Monday, June 11, 2018 @ 2:30 p.m.	Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center
National African American Annual Meeting	Monday, June 11, 2018 @ 4:00 p.m.	Omni Dallas
Messenger Orientation	Monday, June 11, 2018 @ 4:30 p.m.	Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center
SBC Evangelists Southwest Supper Sing-A-Long	Monday, June 11, 2018 @ 4:30 p.m.	Omni Dallas
National African American Fellowship Annual Banquet	Monday, June 11, 2018 @ 6:30 p.m.	Omni Dallas
Asian American Fellowship	Monday, June 11, 2018 @ 7:00 p.m.	Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center
Hispanic Avance Meeting	Monday, June 11, 2018 @ 7:00 p.m.	Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center
SBC Senders	Monday, June 11, 2018 @ 7:00 p.m.	Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center
SBC of Virginia Reception	Monday, June 11, 2018 @ 8:00 p.m.	Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center
Tennessee Baptist Messengers Fellowship	Monday, June 11, 2018 @ 8:30 p.m.	Omni Dallas
Southern Baptists of Texas Reception	Monday, June 11, 2018 @ 8:30 p.m.	Omni Dallas
Connect 316 Celebration	Monday, June 11, 2018 @ 9:00 p.m.	Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center
ERLC/9Marks@9	Monday, June 11, 2018 @ 9:00 p.m.	Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center
LifeWay Movie Screening	Monday, June 11, 2018 @ 9:00 p.m.	Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center

EVENT	DAY / DATE / TIME	LOCATION
CBMW Pastors Panel Breakfast	Tuesday, June 12, 2018 @ 6:40 a.m.	Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center
LifeWay Breakfast	Tuesday, June 12, 2018 @ 7:00 a.m.	Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center
La Gran Comision: Una Llamado A Hacer Discipulos	Tuesday, June 12, 2018 @ 8:00 a.m.	Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center
2018 SBC Annual Meeting	Tuesday, June 12, 2018 @ 8:15 a.m.	Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center
Youth on Mission	Tuesday, June 12, 2018 @ 8:15 a.m.	Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center
Filipino International Mission Board Summit USA	Tuesday, June 12, 2018 @ 9:00 a.m.	Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center
Life Action Ministries Revival Forum	Wednesday, June 13, 2018 @ 9:00 a.m.	Omni Dallas
B21 Luncheon	Tuesday, June 12, 2018 @ 11:30 a.m.	Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center
Mid-America Seminary Alumni & Friends	Tuesday, June 12, 2018 @ 11:30 a.m.	Omni Dallas
For the Church Micro-Conference (MBTS)	Tuesday, June 12, 2018 @ 11:45 a.m.	Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center
Luther Rice Alumni & Friends	Tuesday, June 12, 2018 @ 11:45 a.m.	Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center
Ministers' Wives Luncheon	Tuesday, June 12, 2018 @ Noon	Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center
Mississippi College Alumni & Friends	Tuesday, June 12, 2018 @ 5:00 p.m.	Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center
Christian Women Who Work	Tuesday, June 12, 2018 @ 7:00 p.m.	Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center
NAMB A Night with BLVD	Tuesday, June 12, 2018 @ 7:30 p.m.	Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center
9Marks@9 with SEBTS	Tuesday, June 12, 2018 @ 9:00 p.m.	Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center
LifeWay Movie Screening	Tuesday, June 12, 2018 @ 9:00 p.m.	Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center

EVENT	DAY / DATE / TIME	LOCATION
Southeastern Seminary Women's Leadership	Wednesday, June 13, 2018 @ 7:00 a.m.	Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center
2018 SBC Annual Meeting	Wednesday, June 13, 2018 @ 8:15 a.m.	Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center
Bivocational Luncheon	Wednesday, June 13, 2018 @ 11:30 a.m.	Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center
Gateway Seminary Alumni & Friends Luncheon	Wednesday, June 13, 2018 @ Noon	Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center
New Orleans Seminary Alumni & Friends Luncheon	Wednesday, June 13, 2018 @ Noon	Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center
Southeastern Seminary Alumni & Friends	Wednesday, June 13, 2018 @ Noon	Omni Dallas
Southern Seminary Alumni & Friends	Wednesday, June 13, 2018 @ Noon	Omni Dallas
Southwestern Seminary Alumni & Friends	Wednesday, June 13, 2018 @ Noon	Omni Dallas
Samford University Alumni & Friends	Wednesday, June 13, 2018 @ 2:00 p.m.	Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center

J.D. GREEAR: IN HIS OWN WORDS

BY WILL HALL

Message Editor

ALEXANDRIA (LBM) – J.D. Greear, pastor of The Summit Church in Durham, North Carolina, is a candidate for president of the Southern Baptist Convention for a second time. During his lunch visit to the First Baptist Church in Bossier City Feb. 27, the *Baptist Message* offered to interview him live but he declined, saying he does not typically give live interviews to newspapers.

The *Baptist Message* subsequently learned he had granted an in-person interview the day before with the TEXAN, the newspaper of the Southern Baptists of Texas Conservatives. Greear offered to allow the *Baptist Message* to submit questions for his consideration and reply via email. The offer was declined because the *Baptist Message* typically asks questions for this type of article live in order to evince an authentic response, to allow for a follow up inquiry as appropriate, and to avoid receiving an answer by committee.

However, to give voice to Greear’s position on issues important to Louisiana Baptists, the *Baptist Message* has researched his blogs and video interviews and such public sources to share his own words with our readers.

MUSLIMS, CHRISTIANS WORSHIP THE SAME GOD

Excerpt from a September 30, 2010 interview on the website of The Gospel Coalition, a network of Calvinist churches:

Question: *It’s helpful to lay these misconceptions on the table and to talk honestly about our differences. You make the case that Muslims do worship the same God as Christians, although with obvious errors in understanding. Can you elaborate on how you came to this conclusion and how you would maintain major distinctions between Muslim and Christian understandings of God?*

J.D. Greear: This is a tough question that has a considerable amount of complexity to it. But at the end of the day, I think the question of whether or not you use the Arabic name for God – Allah – is more of a practical



J.D. Greear

question than a theological one. Excerpt from Greear’s book, “Breaking the Islam Code”: Muslims claim to worship the God of Adam, Abraham and Moses. Most missionaries find it therefore helpful to use the Arabic term for God, “Allah” (meaning literally, “the Diety”), to refer to God, and to explain the God Muslims believe in, the God of the Prophets, was the God also present in bodily form in Jesus Christ and the One worshipped by Christians for the past two millennia. You might ask, “But isn’t the Islamic God so *different* from the Christian God that they cannot properly be called by the same name? Aren’t we worshipping two *different* gods? Believing wrong things about God and worshipping incorrectly doesn’t mean one is worshipping a different God, just that they were worshipping the one true God incorrectly.

WHITE PRIVILEGE

Excerpt from a January 1, 2018, Greear blog, “Bearing the Burdens of the Broken”: It’s simply easier to avoid thinking about things that don’t affect us. But if we’re gospel people, we will be aware of the pain others are going through. We will be aware of the privileges we experience that others don’t have. And we will use any position of privilege or strength that we enjoy to serve others. We are called to share the burdens that our brothers and sisters of color live with *as if they were our own*.

Excerpt from a March 19, 2018,

Greear from page 12

Greear blog, "Racial Reconciliation and Cultural Diversity in the SBC":

For those of us in the majority culture, this process has begun with a posture of listening, not talking. The definition of a blind spot, after all, is a weakness that *we don't know that we have*. Historically, the most insidious blind spots result from positions of privilege and power. If we are serious about discovering these blind spots, it means committing ourselves to uncomfortable conversations where we seek more to *understand* that we do to *be understood*.

SINCE WHEN DID WE BECOME SOUTHERN BAPTIST?

Appearing before his congregation February 4, 2018, Greear offered these comments:

Well, let me address something really quickly before we actually do get started because I know that a few of you may have noticed that my name was again placed in nomination for president of the Southern Baptist Convention earlier this week.

A few months ago, several Christian leaders from around the country approached me asking me if I would be willing to do that, and after a lot of consultation with our elder team and our pastoral team and with the consent of my supervisor named Veronica, we believe that we ought to at least make the step, take the step of making ourselves available to that if that's what God desired. The election

is not until June, and it's usually a 2-year term, but let me address three questions that just popped into some of your minds.

Question #1 is "What exactly does the Southern Baptist Convention President do?" And, the short answer to that is probably not nearly as much as you might think. It is a volunteer position, and basically your role is to represent the Southern Baptist Convention in terms of establishing priorities and pioneering new mission ventures, and then hopefully setting a helpful tone for engaging the culture.

Question #2 people ask is, "Is this going to take you away from the Summit Church?" And, the answer to that is a very definitive not at all. Like I said to you, it is a volunteer position, so I would continue to do everything that I'm doing here. You say, "Well does that mean you're going to be traveling a lot?" Not really. In fact, what our elder team did is we just laid out the number of days that I was gone the last year and just said that's the standard. I won't be gone any more than that, and so, it will not take me away from here at all.

The third question some of you just asked is "Since when did we become Southern Baptist?" And, I get that. That's not something we really wear on our sleeve here.

There are obviously parts of the Southern Baptist Convention that we're not excited about, and we don't feel like really represent who we are as a church, but I will

tell you that on the whole we are very grateful to be a part of a network of churches that cooperate for the purpose of mission.

To give you just one easy example to get your mind around: There are 158 members of the Summit Church that are serving overseas as missionaries with the International Mission Board, which is the international missions arm of the Southern Baptist Convention. For us to pay for our members, just our members, just to pay for them overseas would cost us in excess of \$6 million a year.

It doesn't cost us really anything.

And when we give to the SBC, but it doesn't ... they are able to go freely because of the cooperative efforts of 46,000 churches across the United States. So, we are very grateful to be a part of it, and we understand that if we are going to be a part of it, it means that we oughta take some of the responsibility in helping to shape it and to point it in the directions we feel like God would have it to go.

RUSS MOORE VERSUS ROBERT JEFFRESS

Greear's comments during a November 14, 2017, video by The Gospel Coalition, "J.D. Greear on the SBC, Trump, and More":

So I've been very attracted to either to remain within the SBC because, in large part, the staying power of the institution when it comes to international missions.

Their theological training -- I'm pretty excited about the leadership of most of 'em right now.

Kevin Ezell at North American Mission Board is fantastic. He is very humble and approachable.

Of course, David Platt, at the IMB.

Russell Moore is a great representative at the ERLC.

Our seminaries, you know, several of them are led by people that are just -- and willing to do things differ-

ently in how they do it.

And we've just felt like it's worth being a part of the conversation with them to keep it going in the right direction.

I added up, I don't have a statistic relevant today, but last year added up the amount of money that the IMB pays for our people -- just Summit people on the mission field -- and that number was like \$4.6 million.

That's a lot bigger than our mission budget.

And so, you know, that's the power of an institution.

And so, for some of the guys out here, the men and women, it's going to be a natural partnership, and it's gonna, you're gonna hafta, you know, get your hands dirty a little bit.

But, there's more good that'll come out of it, and for some it's not gonna make sense as the right network.

Question: So the disadvantages, then like the difficulty of being associated with the Baptists when something comes out in the news or some Baptist pastor says something crazy on CNN or Fox News.

Greear: Right or has one of the Fox News things in his pulpit on Sunday. [NOTE: A reference to Robert Jeffers interviewing Sean Hannity at First Baptist Church, Dallas.]

Question: A Roman Catholic in his pulpit on a Sunday morning on the same week that he called Roman Catholicism a pagan blood cult.

Greear: No irony there.

Question: No irony there. What does that, what does that draw out in you and what do you do about it?

Greear: Part of it is just the dilemma of being in any large group of people.

I think very quickly after I had grown a little disillusioned with the SBC I found that every other network I started to get in there's like, well, they got crazy uncles too in here...

And I think I'm the crazy uncle to some of these people so, you know, just sort of the

nature of it that it's that and God has always worked in, you know, these imperfect things. And, there comes a point at which hypocrisy is so bad that you can't go on, but

At some point you got to make a decision that you're gonna be with fallen people, and fallen people bring these issues, and you gotta get in there and fight.

NOTE: In the next edition, the Baptist Message will present both candidates "by the numbers."

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Symposium from page 10

worker. Babb and Nicholson both are members of Highland Baptist.

All four will participate in a panel discussion beginning at 6:30 p.m.

"Our purpose will be to educate believers concerning the issue of mental illness and to equip believers to minister to those affected by mental illness," Denton said.

"We want to be in a position to help those inside and outside the church," he continued. "Those who are dealing with mental illness need to know that they are not alone."

"The scheduled event has begun to generate some conversation about the issue

and already we are seeing broken people step forward to say 'I need help.' I trust God will use the weekend to help more people find wholeness in Jesus," Denton added.

For more information about this symposium, call 337.365.5471.

Scheduling Revivals, Crusades, Harvest Days for 2018-2019

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RÉSUMÉS WILL BE ACCEPTED THROUGH APRIL.

PLEASE VISIT CONCORDBAPTIST.COM FOR INFORMATION ABOUT OUR CONGREGATION.

PASTOR NEEDED

Woodlawn Baptist Church, Raville is seeking a pastor.

Anyone interested or anyone sensing God's call to apply for the position should submit a résumé to:
Pastor Search Committee
P.O. Box 506
Rayville, LA 71269
Or email your résumé to:
William.Curry@hydro.com

SEEKING PASTOR CANDIDATES

Central Baptist Church, Marshall, Texas seeking pastor candidates, send résumés to rrobinette@cbcmarshall.org. Small, downtown congregation, affiliated with SBC and BGCT, supporting several local ministries, seeking to meet needs and share the gospel with surrounding community.

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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@baptistsmessage.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

■ **Carl Sullivan** is interim pastor at New Bethlehem Baptist Church, Denham Springs.
 ■ **Bubba Courtney** is interim pastor at Gray's Creek Baptist Church, Denham Springs.
 ■ **Rebecca Galloway** is the new Children's Minister at Norris Ferry Community Church, Shreveport.
 ■ **Caleb Walls** has resigned as music minister at Northside Baptist Church, Denham Springs.
 ■ **Howard Turner** has retired as pastor from Live Oak Baptist Church, Denham Springs.
 ■ **Johnny Morgan** is the new pastor at Live Oak Baptist Church, Denham Springs.
 ■ **Michael S. Fielding** is the new Student Minister at Live Oak Baptist Church, Watson.
 ■ **Austin Bedwell** is the new youth minister at Emmanuel Baptist Church, Shreveport.
 ■ **Chris Lee** is the new interim pastor at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Jonesboro.

HOMECOMING

■ First Baptist Church, Gretna: **100th Homecoming**, April 29, 10:30 a.m. Lunch will follow the service in the fellowship hall. Pastor: Jody Heneghan.

REVIVAL

■ Crockett Point Baptist Church, Crowville: **D-Now**, April 20-22, Friday night, Saturday

morning & night, Sunday morning at regular worship service. Pastor: Curtis Lee Owens.

■ Pleasant Hill Baptist Church, Pine Grove: **Two Rivers Baptist Association revival meeting**, April 21, 6:30 p.m. Speaker: **Randall Carmadelle**. Pastor: Paul Cantrell.

■ Trinity Baptist Church, Natchitoches: **Harvest Day**, April 22, 10: 30 a.m. Evangelist: **Joe Aulds**. Pastor: Josh Currie.

■ First Baptist Church, Jonesville: **Evangelism Rally**, April 22, 5:30 p.m. Pastor: Todd Whittington.

■ New Chapel Hill, West Monroe: **Revival**, April 22-25, Sunday, 10:45 a.m. & 6 p.m. Monday-Wednesday, 7 p.m. Evangelist: **Bill Robertson**. Worship: **Darrell Robertson**. Pastor: Marty Black.

■ First Baptist Church, Jonesboro: **Spring Revival**, April 22-25; Sunday 10:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m.; Monday-Wednesday, 6:30 p.m. Evangelist: **Craig James, Director of Missions North Central Baptist Association**. Worship: **Trey Etheridge**, Briarwood Baptist Church. Pastor: Brian McAllister.

■ Spring Creek Baptist Church, Deridder: **Revival**, April 22-27. Evangelist: **Lyndon Longoria**. Special Music: **Kerry Longoria**. Pastor: Dalton Isbell.

■ First Bastrop Church, Bastrop: **Morehouse Baptist Association Harvest Youth Crusade**, April 23-25, 6:30 p.m. Evangelist: **Casey Johnson**. Music: **Broken Vessels**.

■ Unity Baptist Church, Lawtell: **Revival**, April 29-May 2. Evangelist: **Lyndon Longoria**. Special Music: **Kerry Longoria**. Pastor: Greg Gaspard.

■ Sweetwater Baptist Church, Quitman: **Revival**, April 29-May 2. Evangelist: **Bill Robertson**. Pastor: Wilton Wall.

■ **Red River Parish Crusade** to be held at the Red River Parish Fairgrounds in Coushatta, April 29- May 4. Evangelist: **Sam Moore**. Richard Kaufman Evangelism Director.

■ Laurel Hill Baptist Church, Lacamp: **Revival**, April 30-May 5, 7 p.m. nightly. Evangelist: **Joe Wellman**. The church is located

at 1796 Laurel Hill Rd. Pastor: Wesley R. Jackson.

■ First Baptist Church, Haughton: **Haughton Harvest Crusade**, May 6-9, 6 p.m. nightly in the Worship Center. Evangelist: **Bill Britt**. Worship: **The Jason Lovins Band**. Sunday is 'Student night' starting at 5 p.m. in the Family Life Center. Students will have the opportunity to register for the chance to win \$50,000, by making a layup, free throw, 3-pointer, and half-court shot, or one of five I-Pads. Monday, May 7, is 'Women's night' starting at 6 p.m. in the Family Life Center. Speaker: **Iris Blue**. Tickets are \$10, which includes dinner catered by Grace Estate. Tuesday, May 8, is 'Men's Night' starting at 6 p.m. in the Family Life Center. Speaker: **Hank Parker**, legendary fisherman, hunter and outdoor TV personality and **Bill Britt**. Tickets are \$10, which includes dinner catered by Grace Estate. Wednesday, May 9, is 'Children's Night' beginning at 6 p.m. with a pizza dinner followed by jump rope world record holder **Peter Nestler** sharing his talents and skills, along with the Gospel in the Family Life Center. While Nestler is sharing with the children, the adults will join together in the worship center to hear Britt and The Jason Lovins Band. Tickets will be available beginning April 15 in the foyer following the morning service and will also be available in the church office by calling 318.949.2441. Pastor: Gevan Spinney.

LAGNIAPPE

■ Maple Springs Baptist Church, Logansport: **"In His Hands" Women's Conference**, April 20-21, Friday, 6:30-9 p.m. and Saturday, 9:30 a.m.-noon. Guest Speaker: **Kathryn "Kat" Arnold**, formerly of the Women's Bassmaster Tour and currently with MIRACLE 89.1 Radio. Cost: Free. Meals will be provided. The church is located at 17013 Hwy 5, Logansport, La. For more information, call 318.697.5439. Pastor: Lee McClintock.

■ **Northeast Baptist School Annual 4-man golf scramble**, April 20, Noon at Chennault Park in Monroe. Cost: \$100 per person. Registration and lunch is at noon. Tournament will begin with a shotgun start at 1 p.m. Registration forms are available at the Associations Center, the School, or online at www.nelba.net. For more information call the school at 318.325.2077 or log onto www.mynbs.org.

■ Philadelphia Baptist Church at Horseshoe Drive, Alexandria: **Faith Riders Car & Bike Show**, April 21, 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. Entry Fees: Cars - \$20; Bikes - \$10. All entries get a free lunch. There will trophies given in many categories. All proceeds go to F.A.I.T.H. Riders Ministry. Pastor: Clay Fuqua.

■ Greenacres Baptist Church, Bastrop: **Sportsmen's Event**, April 21, 6 p.m. Supper will be provided. Speaker: **Hank Hough Ministries**. There is no cost but please RSVP by calling 318.281.1303.

■ Coteau Baptist Church, Houma: **Blended and Blessed live simulcast presented by Family Life**, April 21, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. The conference is geared toward blended families. Cost: Free, but a light lunch is served for \$6 a person. Childcare is also available for \$6. To register, please call 985.876.6089. Pastor: Wayne Hunt.

■ Airline Baptist Church, Bossier City: **Conference for Women**, April 22, 6 p.m. Speaker: **Jeannie Pederson**, wife of Philadelphia Eagles head coach Doug Pederson. The Eagles were the champions of Super Bowl LII. Cost: \$10. To register, go to airlinebaptist.com or call 318.746.3495. Pastor: Terry Young.

■ Fairview Baptist Church, Coushatta: **Set Free Women's Conference**, April 27, 6:30-8 p.m. Speaker: **Pat Domangue**. Worship: **Reagan Watkins**. This night of worship is free of charge and dinner is included. Register by April 25. Pastor: Matt Endris.

■ First Baptist Church, Mandeville: **CHARGE Men's Conference**, April 27-28, Friday, 4:30-9 p.m. Saturday, 7:30 - 11 a.m. Speak-

er: **Jim Henry**. Cost: \$25 per person. Register by April 23 to secure your spot. Pastor: Jake Roudkovski.

■ Harmony Baptist Church, Delhi: **Jesus Fest**, April 28. Preaching & singing begins at 2 p.m. The event will be held at 1266 Hwy 859, Delhi, La. Southern Revelation, Gospel group, sings at 5:30 p.m.

■ Start Baptist Church, Start: **Sanctuary Quartet in concert with the Liberty Boys**, April 28, 6:30 p.m. Pastor: Jeff Thomas.

■ First Baptist Church, Shreveport: **Inaugural Benefit Golf Tournament - Golfing Fore Guatemala!**, April 30, 78 a.m. shotgun start at Querbes Park Golf Course. This is a 4-man scramble. Cost: \$300 per team. The hole-in-one prize is a new car. All funds from this tournament will go toward supporting First Baptist Church Missionaries. To register or for more information, contact Ronney-Joe@fbcsreveport.org or call 318.865.8414. Pastor: Jeff Raines.

■ **13th Annual Toledo Bend Fishing Derby**, May 5, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., San Miguel Park beach area, Ages 3-15. Preschoolers must have a parent or guardian present. School-age children groups must have one adult for each 5 children. Bring a fishing pole or rod & reel and bait. A complimentary lunch will be provided. For more information, call Mary Gore at 318.452.9731 or Danny Warmack at 318.315.0713.

■ **Inaugural Youth Bass Tournament**, May 5, 7 a.m. - 1 p.m. Weigh-in at 1:30 p.m. at Toledo Bend Resort Ministries (3840 Carters Ferry Road, Zwolle). For additional information and rules, call Toledo Bend Baptist Resort Ministry at 318.645.6601 or Mary Gore at 318.452.9731 or Danny Warmack at 318.315.0713.

■ Judson Baptist Retreat Center, St. Francisville: **Adult Fish Fry**, May 8, Registration: 9:30 - 10 a.m.; Music: 10 a.m.; Lunch to follow. Music: **Masters-4**. Cost: \$10.00/person. After lunch, prayer walk JBRC or Prayer Drive JBRC. To reserve your place, call 225.634.7225 by May 3.

Vieux Carre from page 11

at how fast God met the need and provided for His people.”
 Badeaux's wife, Lisa, said volunteering at Vieux Carre Baptist reminds her of Acts 20:35, “It is better to give than to receive.”
 “Although I have not been a volunteer at Vieux Carre for a long period of time, I have grown to look forward to seeing the people we serve each month there, and feel that we have become a family of sorts,” she said. “Each soul who comes through those doors is a child of God. We're not there just to give food or a few items of clothing, but we're there to give love. A smile, a hug, the smallest act of kindness – that is being the hands and feet of Jesus. And in doing so, it is truly better to give than to receive.”
 Daniel Dismuke, pastor at First, Norco, said his

members have received countless blessings since they first volunteered in August 2017. They have used their time and gifts in the areas of counseling and discipleship to reach a segment of the population that he believes often are overlooked.
 “I believe that the heartbeat of the church is missions,” he said. “They are not our Jerusalem, but certainly we could consider them our Judea.
 “We have had folks from our community, who do not even attend FBC Norco, who have become part of our team,” he continued. “God has used this opportunity to open the door for relationship building and Gospel conversations on our end. We are excited about what the Lord is going to do there and within our church family as we work together for Him.”

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.

gch zugz fp lzw hf zs op xwqpz, gch zs hs fswd stc

owlqcpll, gch zs tsdy tqzu fswd stc ugchl, gl tp

vsjjgchph fsw.

aqdlz zupllgrscqgcl aswd:prpepc

Clues:
L = S; P = E

Answer to April 5 Scripture Crypto:
Acts seventeen: two

