



THE BAPTIST MESSAGE

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John 3:16

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On second ballot, messengers elect Litton SBC president



Adam Covington photo

SBC President Ed Litton addresses members of the media at a news conference after his victory, June 15.

By Will Hall

Message executive editor

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (LBM) – Ed Litton, pastor of Redemption Church in Saraland, Alabama, was elected president of the Southern Baptist Convention, June 15, in Nashville, Tennessee, during the 2021 SBC Annual Meeting.

Litton won a runoff vote against Georgia Pastor Mike Stone, by a margin of 556 votes, 6,834 to 6,278.

The messenger count peaked at 15,691 prior to the election, according to registration secretary Don Currence. However, only 13,112 ballots were cast.

FIRST ROUND

Stone, pastor of Emmanuel Baptist Church, Blackshear, Georgia, led Litton after the first round of voting among four contenders, who included R. Albert Mohler, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky, and Randy Adams, executive director of Northwest Baptist Convention, Vancouver, Washington.

First Vote: Stone, 5,216, or 37.5 percent; Litton, 4,360, or 32.4 percent; Mohler, 3,764, or 26.3 percent; and Adams, 673, or 4.7 percent (out of 14,013 total votes counted).

CAJUN COMMENDATION

Fred Luter, pastor of Franklin Avenue Baptist Church, New Orleans, nominated Litton with a strong endorsement of Litton's ability as a "uniter" who has "uniquely shown his commitment to racial reconciliation."

Luter described the SBC as "no longer shoulder to shoulder, but face to face" adding that "we are no longer fighting an enemy on the battlefield, we are now fighting our brother in the barracks."

"Southern Baptists, it is time

See LITTON, page 2

Congresswoman Letlow says faith is critical during challenging times

By Brian Blackwell

Message staff writer

MONROE, La. (LBM) – U.S. Rep. Julia Letlow won Louisiana's 5th Congressional District seat in March, only three-and-a-half months after her husband, Luke, died from COVID-19 complications, Dec. 29, 2020. He was just five days from taking office after he had won the election the month before to succeed Ralph Abraham, who retired from Congress.

She told the *Baptist Message* that the prayers of others helped her during that difficult time.

"It's hard for me to put into words how overwhelmingly beautiful and impactful



U.S. Congresswoman
Julie Letlow

and precious those prayers were to me," Letlow said. "Even while we were in the hospital and Luke was in bad shape, we treasured those intercessory prayers that

people were saying on his behalf and on ours. I know that they enveloped him, and he wasn't alone, and he was at peace, and he had hope. To feel that on a visceral level -- thousands if not many thousands of prayers going up -- I will never be able to put

into words what that means to me and my family."

Her husband's death was not the first loss of a close loved one, she said.

When she was a junior

See LETLOW, page 2



Eric Brown photo

Messengers to the 2021 Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting are shown casting their ballots on a resolution. A total of 15,726 of whom 633 were from Louisiana attended the two-day event.

Messengers adopt 10 resolutions

By Will Hall

Message executive editor

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (LBM) – Messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention's 2021 Annual Meeting adopted nine of the 10 resolutions submitted by the Resolutions Committee and added one from the floor that called for "abolishing abortion."

According to *Baptist Press*, the Resolutions Committee had declined

the previously submitted pro-life resolution, June 15, because the issue of abortion had been addressed in another resolution they wrote. However, one of the co-authors of the rejected resolution spoke to the messengers, who voted to bring it to the floor for consideration with a two-thirds vote, and adopted it the next day after the word "alone" was added.

In the end, this resolution declared "that we

will not embrace an incremental approach alone to ending abortion because it challenges God's Lordship over the heart and the conscience, and rejects His call to repent of sin completely and immediately."

Meanwhile, the committee tabled the proposed Resolution 7 they had crafted -- which denounced "the Capitol resurrection of January

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Letlow from page one

at the University of Louisiana at Monroe, her brother, Jeremy, 17, died from injuries sustained in a motor vehicle accident in March 2002. The incident devastated Letlow and her family, but she said she was comforted by many,

including fellow members of the campus Baptist Collegiate Ministry.

"The BCM was there for me in every way possible and was an integral part of shaping my faith," said Letlow, who wrote her doctoral disserta-

tion at the University of South Florida on grief. "As you know college often-times can be that time when people stop going to church and fall off on their faith. It's organizations just like the BCM that kept me connected and engaged."

Mark Robinson, campus BCM director at the time, provided counseling and eventually invited her to be a part of a new Bible study for members of the campus fraternities and sororities. He sensed even during her college time that Letlow was bound for great things.

"Her spiritual leadership, academic abilities and social graces were unparalleled," said Robinson, now the state collegiate ministry director for Louisiana Baptists. "We all knew very early that she was destined to become a great leader in whatever field of discipline she

chose to serve."

Letlow, who is adjusting to life as a congresswoman while also mother to her two children, hopes to continue representing her constituents and family. Her focuses will include agriculture and education.

"We just want to work hard and try to make this world a better place for our children and for future generations," Letlow said. "So, it's an absolute honor to live amongst our rural communities and be a part and member and ultimately to represent them is an amazing honor."

Letlow, who in 1991 put her faith in the Lord and was baptized in the Ouachita River by the non-denominational Covenant Church in Monroe, asked for prayers of clarity of mind and wisdom to serve her constituents and be the hands and feet of Jesus.

"This world is not our home," Letlow said. "We are passing through and are called to live every day to the fullest. Serve other people and let Christ guide your life. We all will be reunited again one day in some place far better."

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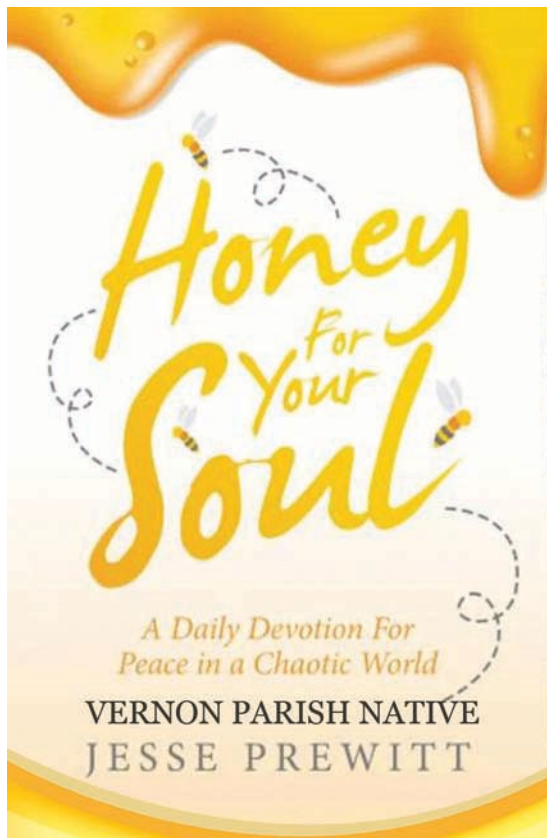
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Litton from page one

to get out of the barracks," he said, adding that "if we don't get out of the barracks, we miss out on what God is doing in a lost and dying world."

"This is our moment to

get focused on the Great Commission," Luter urged. "Friends, take it from Fred. Let's vote for Ed. Ed Litton for president of the Southern Baptist Convention!"



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First Covington launches 'The Chapel' ministry

By Brian Blackwell
Message staff writer

COVINGTON, La. (LBM) – First Baptist Church in Covington has opened a wedding chapel to help couples celebrate God's design for marriage.

The Chapel, located at 16054 Murphy Road, Covington, is located across from the First Baptist Covington campus. The facility can seat 275 guests for larger weddings in the main chapel area and up to 75 for smaller ceremonies in the garden room.

Sam Camp, a member

of First Covington for 40 years and a former deacon, said his family felt compelled to donate The Chapel to the church five years ago. Construction was begun in early 2020 and completed later in the year.

"We wanted a gateway to the church for the public, and marriage came to mind," Camp told the *Baptist Message*. "Marriage is so important in God's design for a man and woman to become one. Since the big auditorium doesn't lend itself to a smaller wedding, we thought The Chapel would be the perfect way to

invite people to come and celebrate marriage here."

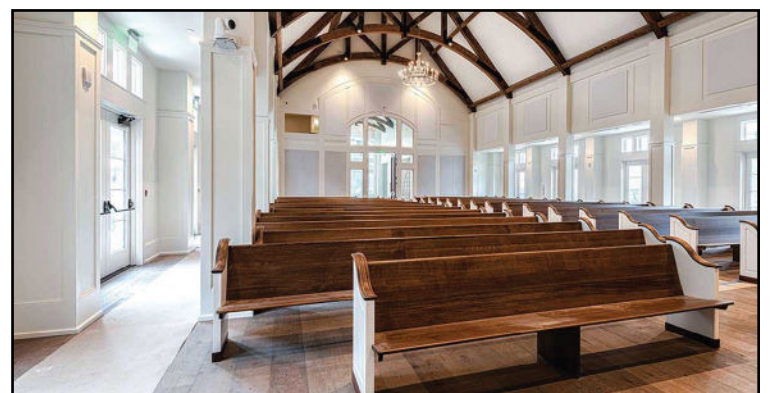
Camp said The Chapel hosted its first ceremony in January and has weddings booked through April 2022, but still has openings. The facility is open to members and non-members, but guests are asked to respect First Baptist Church, Covington's religious beliefs.

For more information on availability, policies, rates and other information visit <https://fbccov.org/chapel/> or send an email to chapel@fbccov.org.



Submitted photos

First Baptist Church, Covington's wedding chapel features a facility that can seat 275 guests and a smaller room that holds up to 75 for smaller ceremonies. The Chapel hosted its first ceremony in January.



Louisiana ministry touches needy in Israel

By Brian Blackwell
Message staff writer

COVINGTON, La. (LBM) – Johnny Huffman, founder of Fairhaven Ministry in Covington, has issued an urgent call for donations that will be placed in a 40-ft. container and shipped to Israel.

"Recently, as I have watched the news, I watch people here in the US, as well as countries around the world, turning against Israel," Huffman told the *Baptist Message*. "The Lord has impressed on me that if there was ever a time that Christians need to stand with and support His people, it is now. It is my opinion that the Lord gives us these opportunities. What we do with them is our decision."

Fairhaven Ministry, through a partnership with God's Warehouse that is operated by Nolachucky Baptist Association in Morristown, Tennessee, is collecting items that will be shipped to and distributed by the non-denominational Joseph Project in Israel. According to its website, since 2000, the Joseph Project has received nearly 800 containers and provided more than \$100 million in humanitarian aid to Israelites.

Israel experienced 11 days of fighting between the country's army and terrorists in the Gaza Strip before a cease fire was in effect, May 20. At least 230 Palestinians were killed, including 65 children, according to the Gaza Health Ministry.

Twelve people in Israel, including a five-year-old boy and 16-year-old girl, were killed.

Huffman's ministry has shipped about 150 containers to 15-20 countries since 1997, including two containers to Israel in July 2016 and another in March 2018. He said the latest developments have reminded him once again of the need for friends of Israel to help the citizens there.

NEEDS LIST

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See ISRAEL, page 12

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**LOUISIANA
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Send Conference draws 10,000 for Gospel training, Crossover enlists 92 volunteers for Gospel work

By Will Hall

Message executive editor

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (LBM) – The June 13-14 Send Conference, jointly sponsored by the North American Mission Board and the International Mission Board of the Southern

Baptist Convention, attracted 10,000 participants from across the nation, June 13-14, for general sessions and breakout meetings headlined by Southern Baptist celebrities such as football coaching legends Bobby Bowden (Florida State University) and Mark

Richt (Georgia University).

Meanwhile, the North American Mission Board was able to enlist 92 volunteers, largely comprising seminary students, according to *Baptist Press*, who conducted four days of door-to-door outreach, June 13-16, coinciding with the two-day Send Conference.

SEND CONFERENCE

Billed as a “gathering of pastors, families and churches across North America learning and celebrating what it means to be on mission together, for the sake of the gospel” the Send Conference offered “specialized tracks for every member of the family” providing “the tools and connections to become a movement of people — the Church — sharing the gospel with a world in need.”

Participants were

blessed during the Sunday night opening session by worship music led by Michael W. Smith and CeCe Winans, and a concert by (Steven Blake) Crowder.

Meanwhile, Tony Evans, pastor of Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship, Dallas, Texas, offered a message that urged the crowd to be “fulltime saints pulling Heaven down to earth as true reflections of the imago Dei.”

“We have watched our nation decline because there aren’t enough accurate reflections of Christ invading the culture,” he said, along with encouragements about unity and racial reconciliation.

The next day participants could join various tracks led by such personalities as David Jeremiah (pastors), pastor of Shadow Mountain Community Church, El Cajon, California; NFL great Benja-

min Watson (students), Scottish-born American contemporary Christian vocalist, writer and speaker Sheila Walsh (women); as well as 26 other presenters.

Bowden and Richt headlined the NAMB luncheon as part of the Monday activities, and IMB commissioned 64 missionaries to cap the day.

CROSSOVER

Despite registering 10,000 participants from across the country for the Send Conference, NAMB noted on its registration website for Crossover that “Due to the ever-changing nature of pandemic guidelines, we are not able to accommodate outside groups this year.”

Regardless, 40 area churches took part in

See SBC, page 12



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Variety of topics among motions presented by messengers

By Staff

Baptist Message

NASHVILLE (BP) – Messengers presented 32 motions during the 2021 Southern Baptist Convention Annual Meeting, and moved:

- for an investigation of the ERLC for concealing knowledge about sex abuse for more than a year and only revealing such information through leaked ERLC letters accusing the EC of racism and mishandling sex abuse cases (Jared Longshore, Florida);
- for an outside investigation of the EC regarding the ERLC's accusations in the leaked letters (Grant Gaines, Tennessee);
- for the Executive Committee to study possible conflicts of interest because the same legal counsel represents the EC and the SBC (Jay Adkins, Louisiana);
- to break fellowship with Saddleback Church

in Lake Forest, California (Shad Tibbs, Louisiana);

- that specific conditions be met before using Cooperative Program funds to pay for an outside investigation of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission or the EC (Allen Nelson, Arkansas);
- that a Fellowship Meal Sunday be added to the SBC calendar (James Allen Murray, North Carolina);
- to rescind

Resolution 9 (that approved of Critical Race Theory and Intersectionality), which was adopted during the 2019 SBC Annual Meeting (Tom Ascol, Florida);

- to end the Committee



Karen McCutcheon photo

Grant Gaines, pastor of Belle Aire Baptist Church in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, presented a motion calling for a task force to oversee a third-party investigation into allegations of mishandling abuse claims by the SBC Executive Committee.

on Resolutions (Ted Traylor, Florida);

- that the North American Mission Board study the Enneagram, a human

psyche theory that includes a personality test (James Walker, Texas);

- that the SBC strike from the 2021 Book of Reports a portion of the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary report, which makes negative characterizations about former SWBTS President Paige Patterson (Peter Lumpkins, Georgia);
- that the Committee on Order of Business amend the order of business to lengthen time for new motions (Joseph Horan, Mississippi);
- for adoption of a resolution against Critical Race Theory submitted with the motion (Bob Dutton, Georgia);
- that the ERLC hire an outside firm to perform a

three-year audit about sex abuse in the SBC (Todd Benkert, Indiana);

- that the SBC investigate claims in the legal filings of the case *McRaney v. North American Mission Board* (Brian King, Oregon);
- to rescind an 1861 resolution dealing with proposed name changes related to the formation of "the Southern Confederacy" (Alan Cross, California);
- that the Executive Committee revise SBC documents to create a 30-day prior release of the Committee on Resolutions report (Robert White, South Carolina);
- to amend the bylaws governing the Resolutions Committee (Charles Johnson, Kentucky);
- to inform messengers about the CP giving of nominees for office (Steve Bailey, Arkansas);

See **MOTIONS**, page 7

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Biden budget refers to 'moms' as 'birthing people'

By Will Hall

Message executive editor

WASHINGTON (LBM) – Sen. James Lankford, an Oklahoma Baptist, challenged Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra about the choice of language in the Biden Administration's \$6 trillion budget request that refers to "mothers" as "birthing

people."

During a Senate Finance Committee hearing, June 10, Lankford conducted a blunt interview, pressing Becerra to explain the unusual phrasing. But Becerra dodged even repeating Lankford's use of "mother."

"I was a little taken aback when I just read it and saw that the term 'mother' was gone in spots, and it was

CULTURALNEWS

replaced with 'birthing people,'" Lankford said. "Is this a direction you are going—regulatory changes that are happening or what the purpose of that is?"

Becerra told Lankford, "I think it's probably—and again I'd have to go back and take a look at the language that was used in the budget—but I think again it simply reflects the work that's being done."

But Lankford pushed back, asking Becerra to "admit that calling a 'mom' a 'birthing person' could be offensive – that they don't want to get a 'Happy Birthing Person' card in May."

However, Becerra declined to answer the question, telling Lankford, instead, "Senator, I'll go back and take a look at terminology that was used, and I could get back to you, but again ... we're trying to be precise in the language that's used."

The term was used earlier in May by Rep. Carolyn B.

Maloney (D-N.Y.), during a House Oversight Committee hearing in a discussion about maternal health. In that meeting she asked, "How does one of the most medically advanced nations in the world continue to fail black 'birthing people' at such high rates?"

These high visibility uses of "birthing people" appear to be a coordinated effort to avoid the physiological reality that only a biological female can give birth – which runs counter to transgender politics that demand treating as "men" those biological females who have not had their reproductive organs removed but call themselves "transgender men."

It also steers clear of the obvious about biological males who call themselves "transgender women," but lack the biological possibility of giving birth.

Rita Lowery Gitchell, special counsel with the Thomas More Society, a "not-for-profit, national public in-terest law firm dedicated to restoring respect in law for life, family,

and religious liberty" based in Chicago, Illinois, according to its website, argued these points in a May 25 column published on thomasmoresociety.org.

She observed that "women, who have taken surgical or psychological steps to deny their chromosomal female identity and to take on a male or binary or non-binary identity," can use the name change to avoid being referred to as "mother."

She also addressed the reverse scenario, writing that despite the "name change" a "chromosomal male who takes surgical or psychological steps to identify as female ... will not have the biological features of a birthing person."

Moreover, Gitchell was adamant that any change from using the word "mother" could not alter a fundamental reality.

"The biological differences of men and women allow for the creation of life," she argued, noting that only "the person or being with the female chromosomes" can "bear life."

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Motion from page 5

- to allow for proxy voting by SBC missionaries (Nate Maglaughlin, Texas);
- to give advanced notice of the Resolutions Committee report (Jason Wing, Ohio);
- to add a corporate day of repentance to the denominational calendar (Roy Youngblood, Texas);
- to resend a list of resolutions by previous Conventions (Jonathan Six, North Carolina);
- to create a task force to pursue the abolition of abortion (Tristan Heart, Michigan)
- to study using Nashville as the permanent site of the annual meeting and creating satellite locations (Gary LeRoy, Tennessee);

- that the SBC give guidance to Southern Baptists about puberty blockers (Walter Boutwell, Alabama);
- that the SBC reject racism, Critical Race Theory and Intersectionality (Todd Stinnett, Tennessee);
- for an SBC name change to the Great Commission Baptist Convention (Philip Nelson, Illinois);
- to study non-disclosure agreements required by SBC entities (Brad Patterson, Texas);
- that no less than 20 percent of time during the annual meeting be allotted for business (Michael Hoffman, North

Resolutions from page one

6, 2021, ... as inconsistent with faithful Christian citizenship," but did not condemn the riots of 2022.

Others:

- Resolution 1 urged Southern Baptists to maintain unity and protect their witness for Jesus Christ.
- Resolution 2 affirmed the sufficiency of Scripture on race and reconciliation and rejected any theory that credits racism to anything other than sin (without naming Critical race Theory and Intersectionality).
- Resolution 3 condemned any effort to repeal the Hyde Amendment (a 50-year federal policy that prohibits using tax dollars to fund abortions except in cases of incest, rape, or to save the life of the mother).
- Resolution 4 denounced the Equality Act, which elevates sexual orientation and gender identity to a status that eclipses religious liberty rights.
- Resolution 5 asked SBC churches to permanently disqualify as pastor "any person who has committed sexual abuse."
- Resolution 6 reaffirmed "sole membership" which defines the corporate structure of each SBC entity, making each legally bound only to the messengers of the Convention.
- Resolution 8 called for China to stop its genocide of the Uyghur people, implored the United States to "prioritize the admission of

Uyghurs to this country as refugees, and provide resources for their support and resettlement," and asked for prayers for the Uyghurs, as well as the Christian workers who bring both physical aid and the Gospel of Christ.

- Resolution 9 mourned those whose lives were lost to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Resolution 10 thanked Nashville for its hospitality as the host city for the 2021 SBC Annual Meeting.

Carolina);

- for a name change to Great Commission Baptists (Christopher Benavidas, Texas);

- to require an audit of each entity with disclosure 30 days prior to the annual meeting (Rick Hillard, Kentucky); and

- that LifeWay Christian Resources produce resources for deaf people (John Blackmon, Georgia).

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2021 regular legislative session dominated by 'vice' bills

By Will Hall

Message executive editor

BATON ROUGE, La. (LBM) – The 2021 Louisiana Legislative Session was designated a budget session, so each lawmaker was limited to submitting five bills each that did not deal with state finances. However, it was those other bills, most involving vices, that seemed to dominate headlines across the state.

PROSTITUTION

Rep. Mandie Landry (D) of Orleans Parish, submitted H.B. 67 which would have legalized prostitution, elevating it to the same status as any line of work in the state. Witnesses in support of the bill mocked “morals” and urged members of House Administration of Criminal Justice Committee “not to look to your pastor” for guidance about prostitution.

But opponents argued that legalizing prostitution would contribute to more human

trafficking and greater exploitation of sex workers – because the bill also decriminalized “pimping” and brothels and these two activities are used to keep women captive in sex trafficking.

In the end, Landry voluntarily withdrew her bill when it became apparent from comments by committee members that it was going to be voted down.

Meanwhile, the House soundly defeated a resolution (H.R. 136) by that committee’s chairman, Rep. Ted James (D), to create a commission to study the benefits of legalizing prostitution (35 yeas-62 nays-8 absentees).

SLIDELL CASINO

Sponsors of two riverboat gambling bills, S.B. 213 and H.B. 497 (later, H.B. 702 was adopted as a substitute), each seeking to place a casino in Slidell, framed the issue as “a local matter” and the right for voters to decide.

However, a strong contingent from Slidell spoke

at each committee hearing, rebuffing both measures as allowing wealthier areas of St. Tammany Parish to avoid having the casino in their respective backyards and yet reap tax benefits from forcing Slidell to accept the casino; and they cited the example of Rep. Richard Nelson (R) to make their point. Nelson was noted in local newspapers for having opposed a proposed boutique hotel and conference center (with an undercurrent discussion of a riverboat casino) in Mandeville, where he lives. On the other hand, he told nola.com that he was “not going to stand in the way of people voting” on putting a riverboat casino in Slidell, 20 miles away from his home.

Moreover, there were charges of conflict of interest against Sen. Gary Smith (D), chairman of Senate Judiciary B Committee and a member of First Baptist Church, Norco. The Advocate reported that he cast the tie-breaking vote in his committee to approve S.B. 213, instead of recusing himself due to his wife

being a paid lobbyist for the measure. The bill subsequently was recommitted to the Senate Finance Committee. Meanwhile, Smith voted also for H.B. 702, again, despite an apparent ethics breach because of his wife serving as a gambling lobbyist, in a 4-3 vote that moved that bill favorably to the Senate Finance Committee.

S.B. 213 did not make the agenda in the Senate Finance Committee. However, this committee did take up H.B. 702 and voted 5-4 to move it favorably to the full Senate, where it was approved by a vote of 23-14-1. It already had passed the House, and now awaits the governor’s signature.

Sen. Sharon Hewitt (R), a presumed candidate for the 2023 governor’s race, sponsored S.B. 213 in the Senate, and Rep. Mary Dubuisson (R) authored H.B. 702 in the House.

POT

The pot lobby pushed multiple measures to the 2021 legislature seeking to: tax raw marijuana (H.B. 434); legalize recreational marijuana (H.B. 524, and substitute, H.B. 699); allow pot smoking as “medical” marijuana (H.B. 391); tax raw pot as “medical” marijuana (H.B. 514); reduce the criminal penalties (no jail, but fines) for first time and

subsequent violators in possession of 14 or fewer grams of pot (H.B. 652); legalize the cultivation, manufacture and retail sale of marijuana (H.B. 709); and study “the impact of legalizing the possession and use of cannabis on the citizens of this state” for the purposes of discovering best practices for regulating the sale of marijuana (H.R. 1).

Rep. Richard Nelson’s (R) attempts to legalize and tax recreational marijuana failed in the House -- H.B. 699 was allowed to expire by calendar, and H.B. 434 was defeated by a vote of 47-49-9.

Legislators stripped the proposed tax on “medical” marijuana from the broader sales tax bill, H.B. 514. However, both chambers passed H.B. 391 (House, 75-18-12; Senate, 23-14-1), which legalizes smoking pot for “medical” purposes, and it is now awaiting disposition on the desk of Gov. John Bel Edwards (D).

Gov. Edwards signed H.B. 652, authored by Rep. Cedric Glover (D), into law as Act 247, which allows only fines for possession of 14 or fewer grams of pot, but jail time and higher fines for a second conviction of possession of more than 14 grams of pot (with the possibility of 8 years of hard labor and fines up to \$5,000 for a fourth and subsequent conviction for possession of

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Session from page 8

this amount).

The House denied Rep Candace Newell's attempt (H.B. 709) to legalize the sale of marijuana and to tax those sales (34-62-9). However, members approved H.R. 1 (63-28), sponsored by Rep. Marcus Bryant (D), that will create a group of stakeholders to study legalization and bring recommendations to the legislature in 2022 about how to implement the sale and taxation of marijuana.

WOMEN'S SPORTS

Sen. Beth Mizell (R), Senate president pro tempore and a member of First Baptist Church, Franklinton, authored S.B. 156 "Fairness in Women's Sports Act" as an attempt to level the playing field for women athletes. In short, the measure prevents biological males (as transgender women) from playing on women's sports teams.

The bill is a response against the H.R. 5 "Equality Act" submitted in the U.S. Congress that would allow biological males to compete as females. It was passed at the federal level by the House and

is awaiting a vote in the Senate. However, an executive mandate promoting transgender rights by President Joe Biden (D) calls for a review of federal policies that likely will produce the same result as passage of H.R. 5.

The Louisiana Senate passed Mizell's measure to guard against males on female teams, 29-6-4, and the House, too, 78-19-8. However, Gov. Edwards has threatened to veto the bill.

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

Rep. Danny McCormick (R), a member of Trees Baptist Church in Vivian, sponsored a resolution to express the legislature's intentions regarding executive order violations that involve the exercise of constitutionally protected religious liberties.

Specifically, the measure will suspend for 14 months "all criminal penalties and restrictions related to religious assembly."

Will Hall, director of the Louisiana Baptist Office of Public Policy testified that the bill was "a common sense" measure for de-escalation in potentially tense situations.

Speaking to the Senate Judiciary C Committee,

Hall said that Gov. Edwards and his staff reached out to Louisiana Baptists and other faith communities during the pandemic when the governor was formulating his policy on public safety measures and that he was receptive to inputs.

But Hall said H.C.R. 5 is needed to deal with impasses that could erupt during emergency orders, and he cited the conflict between the mayor of Greenville, Mississippi, and Temple Baptist Church as an example. Hall said the mayor of that town, who had banned in-person worship services, felt disrespected because the congregation held "drive-in" services where everyone stayed in their cars but parked in the church parking lot listening to the broadcast of worship services. Consequently, the mayor had the town police fine each of the vehicle occupants \$500 for violating his emergency order against religious assemblies, although the Mississippi governor had declared churches to be "essential services."

"By simply taking the penalties out of the equation, as this bill does regarding violations of an executive order, you're offering cool-headed people an opportunity to

de-escalate a situation," Hall offered.

He also referred to the many necessary face-to-face ministries that churches had to continue during the pandemic, including addiction counselling, filling basic needs of families (distribution of food and hygiene products) as well as conducting disaster relief efforts in response to three hurricanes and two other major storms.

Hall said churches were not being defiant but were trying to comply with the emergency order while providing essential services to meet critical needs in the state.

Judiciary C moved McCormick's resolution favorably without a single objection. Both chambers voted for the measure (67-20-18; 23-13-2), but not without at least one strong objection.

Sen. Jay Luneau (D), a member of Calvary Baptist Church, Alexandria, spoke against H.C.R. 5 on the Senate floor, arguing that the measure, "tells churches that they don't have to follow the rules that everyone else has to follow," citing the Bible passage to "render under Caesar what belongs to Caesar."

"So why aren't the

churches willing to follow these same rules that everybody else has to follow?" Luneau questioned. "I think that instead of trying to pass this resolution that says they don't have to follow the laws, they should be the first ones to stand up and say we are God-fearing, Christian people and we are going to follow the laws and we are going to set the example for everybody else."

WOMEN, CHILDREN, FAMILIES

Rep. Mike Johnson (R), a member of First Baptist Church, Pineville, and Rep. Raymond Crews (R), a member of First Baptist Church, Bossier City, presented measures that offered greater protections to women and children.

Crews authored H.B. 357, which enhances protections for young women by increasing the reporting requirements about minors who undergo abortions. There were 15 or so major changes to the present law, but three of the most critical of these hold abortionists accountable for (1) reporting sexual abuse, (2) documenting complications

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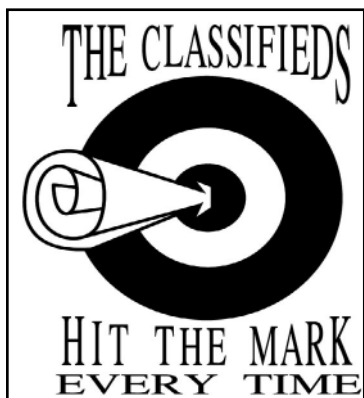
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FULL-TIME PASTOR
Leesville First Baptist, Leesville, LA is seeking a full-time pastor. Please send résumés to: Roger Rolon, 399 Liberty Creek Road, Leesville, LA 71446 or First Baptist Church, P. O. Box 1568, Leesville, LA 71496.



YOUTH MINISTER
First Baptist Church in Coushatta, LA, is seeking a full-time youth minister. Email résumés to jnathandavis@yahoo.com or mail to First Baptist Church, P O 465, Coushatta, LA 71019. For more information call 318.932.4023. www.fbccoushatta.com



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



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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

■ **Michael (wife Tammy) Wilkinson** from Macedonia Baptist Church, Effie to become pastor at East Jena Baptist Church, Jena.

■ **Sam Haggard** is the new youth minister at Bethany Baptist Church, Bethany.

■ **Kirk (wife Jordan) Talley** is the new music minister from Open Door, Ragley to Blanchard Baptist Church, Blanchard.

■ **Joshua (wife Rebekah) Timothy** will be ordained to the Gospel ministry on June 27 at 6 p.m. He is the pastor of Esler Baptist Church, Pineville.

■ **Will Simmons** is the new discipleship pastor at Calvary Baptist Church, Shreveport, from North Keithville Baptist Church, Keithville.

■ **Austin Eaken** is the new youth pastor at Calvary Baptist Church, Shreveport from Grawood Baptist Church, Keithville.

■ **Chris Keeny** is the new pastor at Westlake Baptist Church, Shreveport from Mooringsport Baptist Church, Mooringsport.

■ **Student Minister Noah Greene** is the new Missions Minister at First Baptist Church, New Orleans.

■ **Jesse, wife Christi, Balch** was ordained to the Gospel ministry on May 26. He is pastor of Bosco Baptist Church, Monroe.

■ **Caleb (wife Heather) Brown** as youth directors at Clark Springs Baptist Church, Eros.

■ **Lucas Tolar** is the youth minister at First Baptist Church, Swartz.

■ **Charles Dupree** retired after 38 years in ministry. He was honored with a reception after the morning service on June 13 at Parkview Baptist Church, Monroe.

REVIVAL

■ The Church at Marksville, Marksville: **Revival**, June 27-30, 7 p.m. nightly. Evangelist: **Bill Britt**. Pastor: Ken Austin.

■ Pilgrim Home Baptist Church, Coushatta: **Revival**, July 11-14. Evangelist: **Bill Britt**. Pastor: Shawn Beard.

■ Broadmoor Hispanic Baptist Church, Shreveport: **Harvest Sunday**, July 18. Evangelist: Bill Britt. Pastor: Daniel Hernandez.

■ First Baptist Church, Princeton: **Harvest Sunday**, July 25. Evangelist: **Bill Britt**. Pastor: Darrell Cooper.

LAGNIAPPE

■ Emmanuel Baptist Church in Oakdale is seeking a **bi-vocational pastor**. Please send resumes to: wandamillsaps33@gmail.com

■ **A Wurtzler piano** that is in pristine condition is being given away to either a church or individual in need by retired Pastor Bob Galloway. If interested, call 318.473.8803. The piano must be picked up from Galloway's home, which is located 150 Christine Drive, Boyce, La.

■ Victory Baptist Church, Monroe: **Vacation Bible School**, June 26, 8 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Pastor: Grant Bamburg.

■ Philadelphia Baptist Church, Deville: **Independence Day Celebration**, June 27, 7 p.m. Following the service at

7 p.m. there will be hot dogs and fireworks. Pastor: Philip Robertson.

■ Hopewell Baptist Church, Centerpoint: **Sharing the Hope of Jesus with others**, June 27, 11 a.m. Speaker: **Pastor Ricky Belgard** give his testimony of healing and restoration. Pastor: Ricky Belgard.

■ McClendon Baptist Church, West Monroe: **Vacation Bible School**, June 28-July 1, 8:30-11:30 a.m. Pastor: Kevin Stewart

■ Rocky Springs Baptist Church, Lisbon: **Vacation Bible School**, June 28-July 2 from 5-8 p.m. Pastor: Everett Geis.

■ First Baptist Church, Morgan City: **Vacation Bible School**, June 28-July 2, 9 a.m. - noon. Pastor: Tracey Smith.

■ First Baptist Church, Eunice: **Excavate the Truth 2021**, July 5-9, 9 a.m.-noon. Children who have completed Kindergarten - 6th grade are welcome! During the week the children will learn fun new songs, bible stories, play games, do fun activities, and more. The church is located at: 331 Park Avenue, Eunice, LA 70535. Pastor: Brent Shoalmire.

■ Acadian Baptist Center, Eunice: **Worship Center dedication**, July 10, 2-4 p.m.

■ Faith Baptist Church, Livingston: **Greg Sullivan in concert**, July 11, 10:30 a.m. Pastor: Trey Colwell.

■ Beulah Baptist Church, Winnfield: **Ben Waites in concert**, July 11, 10:30 a.m. Pastor: Lamar Carpenter.

■ Summer Grove Baptist Church, Shreveport: **The Hoppers in concert**; July 11 at 5 p.m. Pastor: Heath Peloquin.

■ Bayou Vista Baptist Church, Morgan City: **Vacation Bible School**, July 12-16, 8 a.m. - noon. Pastor: Steven Kelly.

■ First Baptist Church, New Orleans: **VBS - Concrete and Cranes**, July 12-16, 9 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. VBS is students who have complete kindergarten through sixth grade. Pastor: Chad Gilbert.

■ First Baptist Church, Monroe: **Vacation Bible School**, July 12-16 5-8:30 p.m. Pastor: James Doughty.

■ Great New Antioch Baptist Church, Monroe: **Vacation Bible School**, July 12-16 5-8:30 p.m. Pastor: John Russell.

■ Bethel Baptist Church, Colfax: **Youth Vacation Bible School**, July 16-18, Friday-6-9 p.m., Saturday-9-6 a.m. Sunday 5-8 p.m. Youth VBS for grades that just finished 6th-12th grade. The event will take place in the gym at Bethel Baptist Church, Colfax. You can pre-register at <https://kideventpro.life-way.com/myEvent/?id=60088>. Pastor: Carl Gulde.

■ First Baptist Church, Haughton: **Sporting Clay Classic**, July 17 at Los

Paloma Sporting Clay Range and Event Center! Registration & skill contests begin at 8:30 a.m. with a shotgun start at 9:30 a.m. Cost: \$100 per person or \$400 per 4-man team. All forms and money are due by Monday, June 28. For more information, contact Joey at 318.573.9580. Pastor: Gevan Spinney.

■ Lighthouse Baptist Church, Independence: **Greg Sullivan in concert**, July 18, 11 a.m. Pastor: Russell Osborne.

■ Cheniere Baptist Church, West Monroe: **Vacation Bible School**, July 19-23, 6-8 p.m. Pastor: Zach Anderson

■ Beulah Baptist Church, Winnfield: **Ben Waites in concert**, July 22, 10:30 a.m. Pastor: Lamar Carpenter.

■ First Baptist Church, Jackson: **Vacation Bible School**, July 26-30, 5:30-8 p.m. Pastor: Joe Nesom.

■ First Baptist Church, Mandeville: **Vacation Bible School - Rocky Railway**, July 26-30, Pastor: Corey Fountain.

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Please send resume to: Susan Nolan at snolan@lbch.org or LBCH, PO Box 4196, Monroe, LA 71211.

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Scripture Crypto

The Scripture Crypto is a Bible verse in which one letter has been substituted for another, thus encoding the verse. To find out what the verse is, you must determine what each letter is a substitute for. An "a," for example, may stand for a "t" in this week's issue of the Scripture Crypto. 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.

KYSMP UFB DM DB YDM YFBV, FBV YP KDCC XYISJEYCZ

NJIEP YDM UCSSI, FBV KDCC EFXYPY XYP KYPFX DBXS

YDM EFIBPI, WJX XYP GYFUU YP KDCC WJIB KDX Y UDIP

JBAJPBGYFWCP.

CJOP XYIPP:MPRPBXPPB

Clues:
U = F; D = I

Answer to May 27 Scripture Crypto:
First Chronicles nine: twenty-eight

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that result from an abortion, and (3) ensuring that a minor is mature enough to give consent to an abortion. H.B. 357 passed both chambers (73-28-4; 36-2) and awaits disposition by the governor.

Johnson's H.B. 125 ensures that children's interests will be protected by mandating that "support enforcement services are ... provided by [Department of Children and Family Services] on behalf of the child involved" in any paternity action, support obligation situation, and any change to a court-ordered manner of payment of support. His bill passed both chambers without a single "no" vote and was signed into law as Act 11 by the governor.

Additionally, Johnson was lauded in a press release by Louisiana Right to Life for working behind the scenes to "lead the effort to secure an \$11,946,139 increase for foster care board rates, adoption subsidies, and guardianship subsidies, the first such increases in 15 years," bringing the state "much closer to the southern average for foster care and adoption support."

LOUISIANA BAPTIST INFLUENCE

Mizell and Sen. Heather Cloud (R) offered measures that renewed the authorizations for two task forces created largely in response to two resolutions passed by Louisiana Baptists (2015: protecting children from pornography; 2017: promoting premarital counseling and reconciliation counsel).

Mizell's S.C.R. 68 extends the life of the Task Force on Benefits of Marriage and Incentives for Premarital and Pre-divorce Counseling. Meanwhile Cloud's S.C.R. 195 renews the authorization of the Task Force on Protecting Children from Exposure to Pornography. Both task forces include a Louisiana Baptist Convention representative in their memberships. Neither task force was able to meet during the pandemic, thus leaving their work, started in 2019, incomplete.

VIOLENCE OVER DOMESTIC ABUSE

In perhaps the most bizarre incident of the legislative session, Rep. Malinda White (D), a member of First Baptist Church, Bogalusa, allegedly threatened gun violence and grabbed Rep.

Alan Seabaugh (R), a member of Broadmoor Baptist Church, Shreveport, in a dispute about wording in White's domestic abuse bill, H.B. 159. The episode, which included shouting by White, interrupted proceedings on the floor of the House, June 9, until other lawmakers intervened.

According to theadvocate.com, Seabaugh had recommended changing the phrase "household member" to "family member" because of legal differences between the two terms, and he suggested White did not understand because she was not an attorney.

White said that "triggered" her and confessed that she made comments in the heat of the moment that she should not have made. However, she did not admit

to threatening Seabaugh with gun violence.

However, Seabaugh told state police that White said "either, 'I'm going to get my gun and finish this,' or, 'Let me get my gun and we'll finish this.'"

The next day White pulled her legislation from consideration and apologized to House members.

SBC from page 4

churches took part in "Who's Your One Sunday" to supplement the 92 volunteers who engaged in 6,300 Gospel conversations, resulting in 176 salvation decisions.

NAMB's decision not to accommodate out-of-state groups in 2021 likely hurt the evangelistic outreach in Nashville. But the number of salvation decisions resulting from Crossover has decidedly dropped (except for Dallas as well as two Greg Laurie crusades held in conjunction with Crossover) since 2010, when nearly 2,000 new believers were birthed during Crossover activities:

10-YEAR SUMMARY OF SALVATIONS

2010 -- 1,940 (Orlando)
2011 -- 1,131 (Phoenix)
2012 -- 1,140 (New Orleans)
2013 -- 582 (Houston)
2014 -- 214 (Baltimore)
2015 -- 345 (Columbus)
2016 -- 556 (St. Louis)
2017 -- 115 (Phoenix), plus 3,398 during Harvest America by Greg Laurie
2018 -- 1,015 (Dallas), plus 3,214 during Harvest America by Greg Laurie
2019 -- 364 (Birmingham)
2020 -- pandemic

Offering some hope for greater Crossover participation and results in 2022, NAMB posted "We hope to resume normal procedures next year."

Israel from page 3

packs)

-- walkers, wheelchairs, adult diapers

Contact Huffman to donate items or to provide funds to cover the cost of shipping: 21066 Fairhaven Road, Covington, LA 70435, 985.264.5052 or johnny@fairhavenministry.com.

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