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– James 1:17 (NIV)

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Newsjournal for Louisiana Baptists

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Volume 133 • Issue No. 11

www.baptistmessage.com

May 31, 2018

Trump appoints Tony Perkins to the USCIRF

WASHINGTON (LBM) – Family Research Council President Tony Perkins was one of three evangelical Christians to be appointed to the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) May 15.



Tony Perkins

Perkins, FRC founder and a former Louisiana legislator and interim pastor at the Greenwell Springs Baptist Church, American Values President Gary Bauer, and best-selling author and Kairos Company President Johnnie Moore were among five individuals named to the commission charged with protecting religious freedoms globally.

Nadine Maenza, executive director of the family advocacy group Patriot Voices, and California State University Associate Professor Tenzin Dorjee also were

See PERKINS on 9

Born again, blushing bride in less than a day



Submitted photo

Pastor Dean Ross performs Zachary and Odalys Wright's wedding April 7, the day before their baptism at Restoration Church in Metairie. Odalys Wright is one of 29 people baptized since Restoration Church launched as a replant of Lakeside Baptist Church in December 2013. Ross said on a typical Sunday, one in every three people sitting in their worship center has been baptized at the church.

BY BRIAN BLACKWELL
Message Staff Writer

METAIRIE – Fewer than 24 hours passed between Odalys Wright saying, “I do,” to marry her husband, Zachary, and her announcing, “I do” to become a child of God, April 8, at Restoration Church in Metairie.

Wright made the decision to get married and follow through with baptism upon the urging of Pastor Dean Ross not long after she began attending Restoration Church. Celebrating her love in Christ the day after displaying her commitment to her husband seemed like perfect timing, Wright said about the two God-honoring commemorations.

“Zachary and I have been through some hard times together, but through them the Lord has brought us closer together and more in tune with Him,” Wright said. “When I talked to our pastor about getting baptized, he



Pastor Dean Ross (right) baptized Odalys Wright April 8 at Restoration Church in Metairie.

suggested that going through with my baptism the day after our wedding would be a great thing.

“Once Dean brought me in and out of the water, my friends and family cheered,” she continued. “They celebrated God’s impact in my life.”

See BORN on 2



Submitted photo

Students come to the altar during the Morehouse Youth Revival at First Baptist Church, Bastrop. Sixteen people came forward to indicate their desire to accept Christ at the event, April 23-25.

Prayer and revival go hand in hand for two Harvest crusades

BY BRIAN BLACKWELL
Message Staff Writer

NORTHEAST LOUISIANA – Extended prayer preceded revival at a pair of recent Harvest crusades in Louisiana.

Twenty-six people committed their lives to Christ during the Red River Crusade, and the Morehouse Youth Revival saw 16 individuals submit to live for Him.

“Prayer was absolutely essential to having the effective crusade we experienced,” said Red River Crusade Director Richard Kaufman, pastor of Martin Baptist Church in Coushatta. “We prayed where vehicles would be parked, where people would sit in the stands and even where people

would be standing to get their food and drinks in the concessions area. The great evangelist Billy Graham said three keys to revival are prayer, prayer and prayer. The same thing goes for a crusade. I was overwhelmed at just how the Lord blessed our efforts.”

Both crusades were among a number held so far this year as part of the statewide Harvest campaign to “pray for every home and share with every person” in Louisiana.

Nearly 900 of 1,650 Louisiana Baptist churches have signed up to participate in concentrated prayer and soul-winning activities such as multi-church crusades, door-to-door

See HARVEST on 3

Born from page one

“God’s fingerprints are all over that whole weekend, and what led up to it,” she shared.

A survivor of Hurricane Katrina that made landfall in New Orleans 13 years ago, Wright spent several years working multiple jobs at once, during a time of multiple moves from city to city. When the opportunity arose to return to the New Orleans area in 2007, Wright experienced a fresh start in her hometown.

Then, in the fall of 2017

following Zachary’s repentance to return to the Lord, Wright made the decision to put her faith in Christ.

“I wound up seeing what the Lord did for him, and I said I needed to do this, too,” Wright said. “I felt like the Lord puts people in your life to bring you closer to Him.”

Shortly afterward, Wright moved from being a casual attendee of Restoration Church to a faithful participant in worship services and small group

Bible studies, and her prayer life became more consistent.

Meanwhile, her relationship with Zachary also went to a deeper spiritual level.

“It’s been quite a journey that has brought me peace and joy unlike any other time in my life,” she told the Baptist Message.

Ross said Wright’s memorable weekend is representative of how God has moved among the whole congregation.

“I had spoken to them many times about marriage and was pleased to hear a few weeks ago they wanted to get married and after further discussion she decided to make her newfound faith public through baptism,” Ross recalled. “Conveniently that happened in the same weekend. God is good.”

Wright is one of 29 people baptized since Restoration Church launched as a replant of Lakeside Baptist Church in December 2013. Ross said on a typical Sunday, one in every three people sitting in

their worship center has been baptized at the church.

MISSION TO SHARE

Restoration Church has built itself around a mission of studying the Bible, praying and sharing the Gospel in the community.

One way the members accomplish this is through capitalizing on events in the New Orleans area, drawing around 150 people at its largest events.

At its “Kickoff Sunday,” celebrated on the first weekend of the NFL regular season, the church hosts a worship service and afterwards airs the Saints game on a big screen.

During Mardi Gras season, the church holds a “Restoration Fest” which attracts parade goers to enjoy snow balls, hot dogs, music and other block party festivities, just prior to the Krewe of Napoleon parade.

“We have really utilized celebration events,” Ross said. “New Orleans throws a lot of parties, so we have committed

ourselves to redeeming that party mentality and use it as a way to party in a good way for Jesus.”

MISSION TO DISCIPLE

Ross admits revitalization is not tailored for all pastors. When he was called to replant Lakeside Baptist Church, the congregation had dwindled to just a handful of worshippers. Ross’ three children were the only kids in the entire church the first Sunday they became Restoration Church. By early May, they had more than 15 come on a Sunday morning.

“Our idea was let’s build a church that reaches and engages families in Metairie,” Ross said. “If you want to turn a tide of generations, you have to have families dedicated to raising up new generations for Christ.”

“We have dedicated ourselves to reaching generations,” he continued. “We are beginning to stabilize as a church to reach families. We are on the cusp of taking it to the next level as we reach and disciple families. God has blessed us in our ministries of reaching children and their parents.”

Families not only worship together on Sunday mornings, but join others in participating in small group Bible studies. Meeting places include the church, coffee shops, homes and other locations. Outside of small groups, members engage in one-on-one discipleship.

“During the week we have Restoration groups meet where we eat, work and play,” he said. “We get people together each week to read their Bibles, pray and share their faith together.”

“Our two sweet spots are celebration events and families,” he continued. “We know our niche. The Great Commission is the Great Commission. The great commandment is the great commandment. We live in light of what Christ has commanded us to do.”

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

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

Volume 133 May 31, 2018 Number 11

Harvest from page one

outreach, one-on-one evangelism, single-church revivals and other activities which leverage compassion ministries to share about the love of Christ.

RED RIVER CRUSADE

Churches in Red River Baptist Association gathered for prayer walks and held individual times of prayer leading up to the crusade, which took place April 30-May 4. The churches also gathered for a prayer walk at the Red River Parish fairgrounds in Coshatta the night prior to the opening service of the crusade.

Kaufman said the cooperation among the association's churches was a contributing factor to the success of the Gospel outreach to the community.

Multiple churches played an active role in filling positions on the counseling, cooking and prayer teams.

"The times of fellowship, from the initial planning several months ago to the very last song, made this joint cooperation so enjoyable," Kaufman said.

"Anyone who is part of a crusade that spans this many nights will tell you that it takes a lot of teamwork to pull off something like this. A lot of people in our churches have a burden for lost people in our parish. By having that common bond, we were able to press forward in reaching our communities for Christ."

Nathan Davis, pastor of the First Baptist Church in Coshatta, was encouraged by the new converts who came forward each night. He also enjoyed seeing so many of the association's churches cooperate.

"When we see the young and old give their life to Christ, we rejoice with them," he said. "It just goes to show us time and time again that anyone can be saved."

"Personally, I have been encouraged by the involve-

ment across the association," he continued. "We have people, from churches all across our area, who were trained as encouragers or counselors and to speak with those who came forward to be saved. We know the most important thing is seeing people come to know Christ as their personal Lord and Savior. We owe Him everything."

Sam Moore, who was the crusade evangelist, observed how the power of prayer played into the decisions made.

"The pastors of Red River Parish cooperated together in an intentional effort to reach lost people in their parish, and God blessed," said Moore, founder of Sam Moore Evangelistic Ministries in Bentonville, Arkansas. "The churches prayed, invited and brought lost friends, family members, neighbors and co-workers to the crusade, and many of them left the crusade as new persons in Christ. There is power in the simple preaching of the Gospel and extending an invitation for people to receive Christ and be saved."

MOREHOUSE YOUTH REVIVAL

During the Morehouse Youth Revival, evangelist Casey Johnson challenged students to come and lay down their burdens at the cross.

Johnson, who is pastor of Bonita Road Baptist Church in Bastrop, was encouraged by the faithfulness of the students who came. Attendance averaged 140 each session, April 23-25, at First Baptist Church in Bastrop.

"In a culture that provides so much for them to do, it was great to see their dedication to gathering with their peers to worship Jesus," Johnson said.

Bodie Spicer, pastor of Faith Baptist Church in Bastrop, said the revival was bathed in prayer in the months leading up to the first session. He was overwhelmed by the



Submitted photo

The musical group We R Called leads a time of worship at the Red River Crusade April 30-May 4. Churches in Red River Baptist Association gathered for prayer walks and held individual times of prayer leading up to the crusade. Crusade Director Richard Kaufman, pastor of Martin Baptist Church in Coshatta said the cooperation among the association's churches was a contributing factor to the success of the Gospel outreach to the community.

students' response as they cried out for repentance and revival at the altar.

"There were a lot of tears and a lot of decisions," Spicer said. "The message and music were both timely, and God moved."

"This revival was another

way we saw how God answers prayer," he continued. "We prayed for months for the evangelists, musicians and the kids that God brought there. And we prayed they would be open to hear what God had for them individually. And all those things were answered."

The kids turned out and we saw a great move by the Holy Spirit."

Richard Gambill, pastor of First Baptist, Bastrop, said while he was pleased to see students come forward to accept Jesus, he also was excited that so many others expressed a desire to have revival in their own lives.

"The last night proved to be the climax of the revival, as Brother Casey Johnson challenged students to live out their faith day-by-day before their peers, many were convicted by the Holy Spirit," he recalled "At the end, when he called the students to come and pray for strength in their walk, the altar filled. It was exciting to see God move among our youth and to see their desire to live for Christ."

He expressed appreciation for the way the association's churches came together for the desire of reaching the students and others for Christ during the revival.

"This is an association of churches who are truly working together for the glory of Jesus Christ and the advancement of His kingdom," he said. "I'm glad to be a part of it."

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David Hankins: the SBC presidential election

ALEXANDRIA - In fewer than three weeks at our annual convention in Dallas, June 12-13, Southern Baptists will elect a new president. The two announced candidates are Dr. J.D. Greear and Dr. Kenneth Hemphill.

J.D. Greear ran two years ago and lost to the current SBC president Steve Gaines in a close and controversial decision.

After his loss, some suggested that J.D. should be elected without opposition this year because he was such a good sport last time. He was a good sport.

Almost every losing candidate across the decades of Southern Baptist life has been gracious in defeat.

However, it was never the practice, or even the suggestion that they automatically would be the president the next rotation.

We do not elect two presidents at a time. Things change a lot in two years, as they have this last two. Any group of Baptists or even one Baptist may nominate whom they will for president.

But no one can confer the office on someone. It is not our practice and should not be. Only the messengers in session can elect a president. So, again this year, the average Baptist messenger will exercise the right to decide who will lead the convention.

I am supporting Ken Hemphill for the office.

It is not because of personalities. I like both of them. They are both honorable Southern Baptist ministers, faithful family men, authors, excellent local church leaders, highly educated, articulate, winsome, passionate, evangelistic, mission-minded followers of Christ. And it has nothing to do with age. Both men have suitable life experience and vigor and energy to lead, and to influence Southern Baptists of all ages. (By the way, I am more than tired of identity politics whether its race, gender, age, or geography. It is foolish, divisive, and unbiblical).

I made my choice to support Ken because he stands for things that are crucial to Southern Baptist health and vitality. And he has not had to modify anything to be quali-

fied to be SBC president. He has believed and practiced these things for years.

Ken is an unabashed Southern Baptist. It is not an incidental or unimportant relationship for him. We are his spiritual family. He is thankful for how God is using us and is proud to claim us.

Ken is a lifetime champion for the Cooperative Program in word and deed. As president, he will not be in the awkward position of challenging the churches to support something he has not sacrificially supported.

Ken values churches of every size. He has pastored a mega church but he knows Southern Baptists cannot reach their potential just by depending on the largest churches alone. God has used him across the years to lead many, many congregations of every size to revitalization. (His seminary congregation with a beginning attendance of 40 baptized 50 people the eighteen months he served them).

Ken affirms the pivotal role of our Southern Baptist infrastructure and ministries at every level – associational, state, and national. He does not believe local associations and state conventions are impediments that need to be discarded or defunded, but instruments for Kingdom accomplishment that need to be generously supported and



DAVID E. HANKINS
Executive Director
Louisiana Baptist
Convention

utilized.

Ken believes that God loves everyone, that Jesus died for the sins of every person, and that anyone can repent and come to faith in Christ. He is absolutely clear on the “unlimited” nature of the Gospel. He is committed to keeping us out of theological speculation that drains our practice of and enthusiasm for evangelism.

Ken is committed to advancing the cause of racial reconciliation which Southern Baptists began decades ago, and to do it in a way that unites us rather than divides us.

Ken does not believe Southern Baptists are perfect but he has confidence in their convictions and their values when it comes to political and cultural issues. Rather than lecture the churches, he believes Southern Baptist leaders ought to be responsive and responsible to the people as we endeavor to be salt and light.

God has given Southern

Baptists a statesman in Dr. Ken Hemphill. And God has given Ken and Paula the leading to allow his name to be put in nomination. I encourage you to join me in voting for Ken Hemphill for President of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Please, pray for Dr. Gaines as he finishes his second term. I thank God for Steve’s excellent leadership. Pray for every aspect of the meeting.

And, remember: the candidate with the most messengers voting for him in Dallas will be the next president. This is the time for rank and file Southern Baptist pastors and people to show up and select the man they believe God wants to be our leader. Let’s do our duty.

Fraternally,

David E. Hankins

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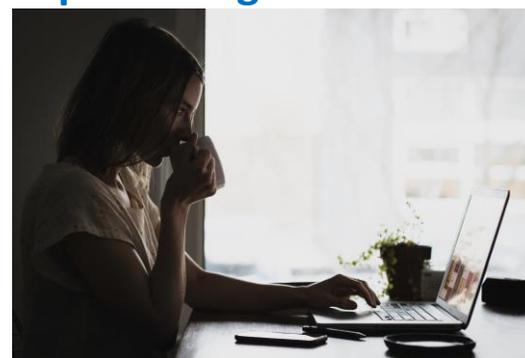
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Four-day crusade nets 160 souls at First Haughton

By BRIAN BLACKWELL
Message Staff Writer

HAUGHTON. (LBM)-Members of First Baptist Church in Haughton humbled themselves individually and corporately leading up to the Haughton Harvest, and consequently saw the Holy Spirit convict 160 people of their need for Christ, May 6-9.

“We have never prayed as much for a revival as we have for this,” said Pastor Gevan Spinney. “Everyone got involved and when we showed up during the revival, we were expecting God to move. We asked Him to save our friends during that week, and it was really awesome to see God answer those prayers. The biggest thing is we prayed and asked God to show up, and He did.”

The Haughton Harvest is one of hundreds of events held or scheduled this year as part of

the statewide Harvest campaign to “pray for every home and share with every person” in Louisiana.

Nearly 900 of 1,650 Louisiana Baptist churches have signed up to participate in concentrated prayer and soul-winning activities such as multi-church crusades, door-to-door outreach, one-on-one evangelism, single-church revivals and other activities which leverage compassion ministries to share about the love of Christ.

FREEDOM IN CHRIST

Almost 2,000 people showed up over the course of the four night event, which focused on a different age group or gender for each session. The harvest of souls included 15 on youth night, six at a ladies event featuring Iris Blue of Duane and Iris Blue ministries



Bass fisherman Hank Parker shares the Gospel with a room full of men during the Haughton Harvest. More than 160 people accepted Christ during the crusade.

and 41 at a men’s event featuring professional bass fisherman Hank Parker. Already, 13 of the 160 new believers have been baptized.

The highest number to take part in a single session took place at the Bayou Dorcheat Correction Center in Minden on Monday, May 7. When the invitation was extended by Bill Britt, the evangelist during Haughton Harvest, 51 inmates and two guards made decisions to follow Jesus.

Jason Lovins, who along with his band provided the

music the entire week, said his first exposure to leading worship inside a prison was an experience hard to put into words.

“I was so blown away by how much their warden loves these guys and how much he loves Jesus,” Lovins said. “We had this intense worship experience and could tell the Holy Spirit was moving inside those walls. The people at First Baptist Haughton prayed for this event 40 days and we could really tell how much they poured into prayer. The Lord definitely showed up and moved in ways we never expected.”

Spinney, who is the prison’s chaplain, said the response to the Holy Spirit during the worship service was the largest number of inmates to accept Christ at any one time since his congregation began ministering inside the correction center.

“Seeing 53 men give their life to Christ was a true movement of God,” Spinney said. “It’s one of those things you go home afterwards and ask yourself if this really happened. Some of the men in there have addictions to drugs and alcohol. God’s giving them freedom in Christ and breaking their chains in one sense.”

HOUSE OF PRAYER

The prayer movement for Haughton Harvest began in January.

Using BlessEveryHome.com, members prayed for their neighbors for 100 days. For the first 20 days, participants

received a daily email containing names (heads of household) and addresses for five neighboring residences as a reminder to pray for the salvation for everyone in that home – for a total of 100 neighboring families each. First Haughton members prayed for more than 4,000 families during that timeframe.

A month prior to Haughton Harvest, members participated in 40 days of fasting along with their prayers, with members coming to the campus to ask God to move during the revival.

The final large prayer gathering took place April 29 during the church’s evening worship service. The Solemn Assembly focused on confession, repentance and renewed commitment to Christ. Adults and youth gathered in the worship center, while young children took part in a prayer walk around the campus.

Moving forward, Spinney hopes the movement by the Holy Spirit during the Haughton Harvest continues for years to come.

“My prayer is that this is that pivotal moment that changes the course of our church,” he said. “I pray we will really sense that purpose God has for us individually and corporately to be a light in the Haughton area. We need to have that burden and take that hope of Jesus to our neighbors. It doesn’t end with an event but literally impacts our community as the church goes out to be the church.”

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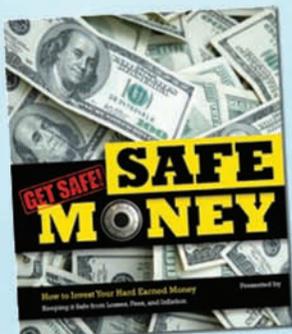
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Retired DOMs hold reunion, remain active in Louisiana Baptist life

By BRIAN BLACKWELL
Message Staff Writer

ALEXANDRIA (LBM) –Twenty-two retired Louisiana Baptist directors of missions, along with former Louisiana Baptist Convention missions and ministries staff and other guests, gathered at the Alexandria state missions center, May 15, for a first-ever reunion.

Don Mabry, who retired as Louisiana Baptist Convention state missions and ministries director in 1999, said the meeting allowed the directors of missions to reminisce about the highlights and challenges they faced.

“We enjoyed each other’s company and had a good fellowship time of remembering some of the wonderful things that went on with Louisiana Baptists,” Mabry told the *Baptist Message*. “On this day, we rejoiced together about what the Lord has done with a lot of our folks.

Through the years there have been some very wonderful people serving the Lord in Louisiana. When some of them called and asked if we could have a reunion, I told them sure and I think everyone had a great time.”

Addressing the directors

of missions, LBC Executive Director David Hankins commended them for still caring for pastors and churches in the state.

“Some of the best help that’s being done in our churches around Louisiana is by you guys who still have the passion for the Lord in your heart, your mind is still there and your willingness is certainly there,” he said. “And you’re being useful as interim pastors, full time pastors, supply pastors and doing the work in the churches.”

Wallace Primeaux testified how God has blessed him since his retirement in 1994 as director of missions of Evangeline Baptist Association, where he served for 21 years. Since his retirement, Primeaux has faithfully served as pastor of Esther Baptist Church in Kaplan, which averages 25-30 for Sunday morning worship services.

“God’s been good, and I know all of you have been busy in what the Lord wants you to do,” Primeaux shared during his time of reflection. “Louisiana Baptists treated me royally and I am grateful.”

Lee Dickson shared about the value of godly mentors who shared wisdom with him during his journey as director

of missions for the District 8 Baptist Convention, which he served from 1978-2015. He also shared how his mentor, Arnold Nelson, encouraged him at each stop along the way when he served as pastor of various churches. Nelson was the District 8 Baptist Convention DOM before Dickson assumed the role.

“Everywhere I went, Arnold Nelson was there,” he said. “To me, that says what we are all about as directors of missions. People have since told me those kind of things (he said to me), and I know they have to you as well.

“I’m where I am,” he said to Nelson, “because you recommended me or you put in a good word for me. And I’m thankful for that.”

Like many of his fellow directors of missions, Dickson worked with several former LBC executive directors, and he said the encouragement and lessons in ministry received from Bob Lee and Mark Short are among his most cherished memories.

“You remember when Bob Lee put his arm around you and you felt like a million dollars when he removed it,” Dickson recalled. “You knew you could do what God wanted you to do.”



Brian Blackwell photo

Former directors of missions Alan Knuckles (left) and James Carson enjoy a cup of coffee and fellowship before the start of the DOM reunion.

Dickson said he learned valuable time management skills from Short.

“Do it, delegate it or ditch it – that was his whole philosophy in life,” he said. “Either do it yourself, or delegate it to somebody else to do it, or just ditch it, it’s not worth messing with.”

Alan Knuckles reminded the directors of missions that while they no longer serve in that capacity, they still have an influence with pastors in their area. Referencing a conversation he had with a pastor who sought his advice on a problem, Knuckles was able to offer him encouragement

and words of wisdom.

“In all those long drives and all those long miles, that’s what it’s about,” said Knuckles, DOM of Acadia, Louisiana and Mt. Olive associations from 2010-2017. “Those young pastors need us.

“That’s to me where DOM work is,” he continued. “That’s the joy for me, to know and to see these guys still loving, still caring, still needing, and they need you too. I just want to challenge you in your retirement don’t forget those young pastors. That’s where the real joy of ministry comes in.”

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NOBTS Graduation: 'Jesus changes everything'

BY MARILYN STEWART
NOBTS Communications

NEW ORLEANS – As the world watched the royal wedding festivities at Great Britain's Windsor Castle May 19, graduate candidates waited patiently to receive their diplomas inside the Leavell Chapel on the campus of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

NOBTS President Chuck Kelley reminded the chapel audience that while a media frenzy that morning surrounded Prince Harry and his new bride Meghan Markle, no reporters waited outside to talk to them.

"So, why does this day matter?" Kelley asked the crowd. "The occasion we are here for today is far, far more significant than that gathering that has the eyes of the whole world."

Every graduate is important, Kelley explained, but the ministries and positions of service each would soon occupy did not depend on them.

"Your life matters," Kelley said. "But, it's not about you. It's about Jesus. He holds the key."

Kelley explained that he carries in his pocket a key once used to unlock cell doors at the Louisiana State Penitentiary, Angola, La. Worn past its usefulness, the key now is "retired," Kelley said.

"I carry it with me always

as a reminder that Jesus changes everything," Kelley said.

Once known as the "bloodiest prison in America," the Angola prison today is home to more than 325 graduates of the NOBTS baccalaureate program, with inmates leading 25 cell block congregations and baptizing about 100 per year using a child's wading pool.

The change to the maximum security prison started 22 years ago when then-warden Burl Cain called and asked if the seminary would begin a theological training program for inmates, Kelley explained. Of the prison's 5,000 inmates, many are serving life terms.

Kelley related that at the first Angola graduation 20 years ago, Cain told him that each of the graduates "had killed at least one person," but that the joy on their faces was unforgettable.

"The effect on the prison has been profound," Kelley said. "The difference is the Gospel."

Kelley said some graduates at Angola have transferred to other prisons where they serve as "missionaries" sharing the Gospel and starting congregations. Once, an inmate at another NOBTS prison extension center asked for Kelley's help in transferring out of his medium security prison to Angola.

Kelley explained that the



CHANDLER McCALL photo

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary President Chuck Kelley presents Marco Morales with the master of divinity degree with a specialization in Christian apologetics during the seminary's commencement service May 19.

man had taken every course NOBTS offered at his prison and wanted to go to Angola where more NOBTS courses were offered.

Each graduate matters, Kelley reminded them, though they would not be the lead story on the evening news. Kelley urged them to remember that "no lives are too broken; no hatreds and hostilities too deep."

"This is your life. This is your calling," Kelley said. "To bring the balm of Gilead, to bring the life-transforming power of the Gospel to bear on every form of human need, every kind of life in every kind of circumstance. Jesus changes everything."

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary conferred 106 masters degrees and 34 doctoral degrees including 11 Ph.Ds, 20 D.Min., and three D.Ed.Min. degrees. Forty-two M.Div. degrees, 28 with specializations, were conferred.

During commencement services held May 18, NOBTS' Leavell College granted 61 bachelor degrees, including the Bachelor of Arts in Christian Ministry to five at the Angola prison, and 13 to the Mississippi State Penitentiary, Parchman, Miss.

The Lockman Foundation presented each graduate with a copy of the New American Standard Bible.

NOBTS' LOUISIANA GRADUATES

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and Leavell College Graduates. The following graduates with Louisiana ties received certificates and degrees during New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and Leavell College commencement services May 18 and 19.

**ASSOCIATE
IN CHRISTIAN MINISTRY**
Francisco Daniel Hernandez
Shreveport

**BACHELOR OF ARTS
IN CHRISTIAN MINISTRY**
Caleb Michael Smith
Kentwood
John Mark Williams
New Orleans

**MASTER OF ARTS
IN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION**
Amy Elizabeth Mullins
New Orleans

MASTER OF ARTS (THEOLOGY)
Matthew Butts
Benton

MASTER OF DIVINITY
Irvin Moses Wasswa
New Orleans

**MASTER OF DIVINITY WITH A
SPECIALIZATION IN CHRISTIAN
APOLOGETICS**
Marco A. Morales
New Orleans

**MASTER OF DIVINITY WITH A
SPECIALIZATION IN COUNSELING
(LICENSURE TRACK)**
David Rodriguez
Gretna

**LONG COMMITMENT
TO UNDERGRADUATE TRAINING**

The passion which led to the creation of Leavell College stretches all the way back to the seminary's beginnings 100 years ago, as well as the first attempts at establishing a college, dating to the 1950s.

Today, Leavell College offers four associate degree programs (Christian ministry, music and worship, children's ministry, and women's ministry) and two bachelor's degree programs (Christian ministry and music).

The college also offers diploma and certificate programs designed to enhance the ministry of the local church. Students can complete a degree by studying on the main campus (in semester-length classes or short-term workshops), at an extension center, or online.

Leavell College surpasses 5,000 graduates during 25th anniversary commencement

BY GARY D. MYERS
NOBTS Communications

NEW ORLEANS – Leavell College of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary marked two significant milestones during the school's commencement service Friday, May 18: Commemoration of 25 years as a four-year institution and celebration of its 5,000th graduate.

"We are preparing students so that they are first and foremost grounded in their biblical understanding. This is unchanging," Thomas Strong III, dean of Leavell College, said in a recent interview. "We are preparing students to build their lives upon the Scripture and then to help others do so as well."

According to Strong, this commitment to the Bible and a biblical understanding of ministry leads to a deep commitment to the local church among the

school's students.

This year's top graduating bachelor's student, Jerome Bradley, exemplifies this dedication to the local church, Strong said.

Bradley, who will continue as a master's student at NOBTS in the fall, sensed a call to ministry while serving as a Sunday School teacher at Franklin Avenue Baptist Church in New Orleans.

Retired after 33 years in the military and federal government service, Bradley began studying at Leavell College with the goal of becoming a chaplain. Throughout his time in the undergraduate program, Bradley continued to teach at his church and serves as a counselor at the Bridge City Youth Detention Center.

"Our students have not forsaken the church but instead, see that the church still has a

great place in the Kingdom," Strong said.

CREATING AN UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE PROGRAM

Known first as the School of Christian Training, Leavell College began offering full bachelor's degrees during the 1992-1993 school year. From the beginning, the college prioritized adult learners seeking a basic level of ministry training. In the early years, Leavell College only accepted students 25 years of age or older. Jimmy Dukes, the first dean of the four-year college, designed the bachelor's program with the idea that many of the school's graduates would continue their study in the NOBTS graduate program.

While the age restriction has been removed, Leavell College still attracts many

adult learners transitioning from other careers along with traditional, college-aged students. All students who attend Leavell College are required to articulate a call to ministry and must be endorsed by a church.

In 1997, the college was renamed the College of Undergraduate Studies at NOBTS to better reflect its expanded mission. In 2003, NOBTS trustees approved the Leavell College name to honor the outstanding contributions of the Leavell family. Landrum Leavell II, NOBTS

president from 1975 until 1995, was president of the seminary when the four-year college was founded. Earlier, Roland Q. Leavell served as the seminary's president from 1946 until 1958 and was instrumental in the acquisition and construction of the current NOBTS campus.

Report: Foundation sees increase in assets, donations

By **JERRY LOVE**

Director of Planned Giving

ALEXANDRIA (LBM) – Some positive economic news, a significant increase in assets and deposits, highlighted the quarterly meeting of the Louisiana Baptist Foundation Board of Trustees meeting May 8.

INVESTMENT UPDATES

Pat Lacour, trustee from Pineville, chaired the morning meeting of the investment committee and had Lee Morris, Investment Consultant with Graystone, give an update on the performance of the LBF portfolio.

Morris said the first quarter saw “lots of noise, with not much happening,” explaining that there was a lot of volatility in the equity markets without much progress in investment growth for the beginning of the year.

The outlook for fixed income positions is still very modest, he added, saying the general expectation is that the Federal Reserve will bump rates higher at least a couple more times this year. However, the LBF’s bond portfolio managers are continuing to maintain shorter durations, hedging against the rise in rates.

Other smaller investment allocations in the LBF portfolio, such as preferred stock, and, oil and gas MLP’s, continue to add value to the

mix of assets so far this year, he said.

Morris told trustees analysts expect international equities to see gains in the near term and that market circumstances are more favorable to active management of portfolios than passive (mirroring an index) management, a situation for which the LBF is well positioned.

Morris concluded by explaining how the asset allocation of the portfolio is mitigating risk, and by assuring trustees that individual sub advisors and managers are being closely monitored to ensure they are staying with their specific strategy.

On March 31, 2018, the quarterly investment returns for the major components of the LBF portfolio were:

- Short Term Fund: 1.08% actual annualized yield;
- Group Investment Fund, comprised of various market sectors: -0.95% total return;
- Diversified Income Fund, conservative income-oriented fund: -0.89% total return.

In reviewing the Foundation’s financial positions for the first quarter of 2017, Chuck Murray, controller for the Louisiana Baptist Foundation, reported assets under management were \$169,764,480 -- an increase of approximately \$4.6 million in the first 3 months of the year. He also reported a net surplus for the budget.

OPERATIONS REPORT

Following up on a discussion from the previous meeting, the operating committee, chaired by John Carroll of Columbia, debated at length the format of the trustee meetings.

After considerable discussion, the committee proposed keeping the standing committees but asked all trustees to attend both committee meetings. Thus, any business conducted in committee would be heard by all trustees and acted on in a more efficient manner, and, in most cases, the afternoon plenary session of the full board could be eliminated.

Jerry Love, director of planned giving, reported a slow start on gifts at the beginning of the year, telling trustees this seemed to follow the pattern of the last several years of most gifts coming in later months.

Love said the staff has been making presentations to churches and ministry events in an effort to encourage Louisiana Baptists to leave a gift to their chosen ministry while living, or, as part of their estate plans. He also said the Foundation is exploring and implanting social media advertising in order to target information to select demographic groups, regarding estate stewardship.

Following lunch, the trustees approved the recommendation from the operating committee regarding the meet-

ing format.

The next meeting for the Louisiana Baptist Foundation Trustees will be July 24, 2018.

The Louisiana Baptist Foundation assists individuals with gifts that benefit Louisiana Baptist churches and ministries, and to assist Baptist churches and entities with financial management.

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WANTED

The Louisiana Baptist Historical Association is seeking former members and anyone else, who has an interest in the history of their church or Louisiana Baptist institutions, about restarting the organization. Those interested should send their contact information to Perry Lassiter at perrylassiter@yahoo.com, plassiter@suddenlink.net or by calling/texting 318.243.4772 to set up a meeting.

Louisiana Baptist Children's Home & Family Ministries, Monroe, LA

LIFE-CHANGING CAREER OPPORTUNITIES!

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES

Full-time position includes salary, benefits, and paid vacation. Requires a master’s degree in social work, plus four years of experience in child welfare or related field. Excellent interpersonal, written and verbal communication skills are required. Must have a sense of call and commitment to a ministry of service to children and be an active member of a local Southern Baptist church.

Essential Responsibilities: Supervise, train, schedule, and evaluate all LBCH foster parents. Assist Executive Director of Child & Family Services as needed.

Please submit résumé to Susan Nolan at snolan@lbch.org or P.O. Box 4196, Monroe, LA 71211.

CAMPUS FOSTER PARENTS NEEDED!

Husband/wife teams needed. Full-time positions include salary, benefits, paid vacation and training. Provide love, care, and hope in Christ to children in need. Applicants should not have children living at home under the age of 18. Must have a sense of call and commitment to a ministry of service to children and be an active member of a local Southern Baptist church.

Please send résumé to Dr. Perry Hancock (phancock@lbch.org) or Susan Nolan (snolan@lbch.org) or P.O. Box 4196, Monroe, LA 71211.

FOSTER & ADOPTION SPECIALIST NEEDED

Full-time position needed for Alexandria, LA. Position includes salary, benefits, and paid vacation. Requires master’s degree in social work. Minimum of two years’ experience in social work field preferred. Must demonstrate proficient communication and writing skills. Some travel required. Must have a sense of call and commitment to a ministry of service to children and be an active member of a local Southern Baptist church.

Please submit résumé to Susan Nolan at snolan@lbch.org or P.O. Box 4196, Monroe, LA 71211.

Perkins from page one

among appointees joining the three evangelical appointees. Dorjee was named to a second term and former West Virginia First Lady Gayle Conelly Manchin was appointed in April.

President Donald Trump named Bauer and Moore to the commission. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) tagged Perkins.

Perkins vowed as a USCIRF member to help fully implement the Frank R. Wolf International Religious Freedom Act (Frank Wolf Act), passed in 2016 to strengthen the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (IRFA).

He also said he would address religious persecution in the 16 nations on USCIRF’s 2018 list of Countries of Particular

Concern.

“From my post at USCIRF, I look forward to doing all that I can to ensure that our government is the single biggest defender of religious freedom internationally,” Perkins said in a written statement. “As a commissioner, I also look forward to working with willing partners among those nations on USCIRF’s list of ‘Countries of Particular Concern’ to substantively address religious freedom concerns, including at the grassroots level, and assist them in being removed from the list. It is my hope that through the work of USCIRF, the world will become one step closer to recognizing the vital role religious freedom and the defense of religious minori-

ties play in peace, security and human flourishing.”

Richard Land, who advocated for passage for the International Religious Freedom Act that established USCIRF in 1998, applauded the additions.

“You have three evangelical Christians who are now on that board,” Land told Baptist Press, “and all three of them are committed to freedom of conscience and religious freedom around the world.

“This is a very good day for people who care about people who are undergoing persecution for their faith, whatever that faith is, around the world” said Land, former president of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission.

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

- **Charles Malone** is the new pastor at Bethlehem Baptist Church, Calhoun.
- **Morgan McCallister** is the new pastor at Trinity Baptist Church, West Monroe.
- **Jason Purdy** was ordained April 22 at First Baptist Church, Livingston.
- **Frank Valenzano** resigned as pastor of One Life Church, Denham Springs and is now the new pastor at First Baptist Church, West Fairbanks.
- **Mallory Sanchez** is the new worship leader at Bayou Oaks Baptist Church, Monroe.

HOMECOMING

- Pine Hill Baptist Church, Leesville: **124th annual homecoming**, June 3, 10 a.m. Dinner on the grounds will follow the service. Speaker: **Chase Burns**. Pastor: Tri Evans.
- Mt. Gilead Baptist Church, Vivian: **158th Homecoming**, June 3, 10 a.m. Dinner on the grounds will follow the service. The church invites everyone to come and fellowship on this special day. Speaker: **Bill Treadway**. Special Music: Simple Faith. Pastor: Bill Treadway.
- Pisgah Baptist Church, Bernice: **50th annual homecoming celebration**, June 10, 10:00 a.m. Speaker: **Jay McCallum**.

REVIVAL

- Hurricane Creek Baptist Church, Trout: **Revival**, June 1-3. Evangelist: **Scotty McDowell**, chalk artist. Pastor: Donnie Stephenson.
- Antioch Baptist Church, Farmerville: **Summer Revival**, June 3-6, Sunday, 6 p.m.; Monday-Wednesday, 6:30 p.m. Evangelist: **Jeremy Pruitt**. Worship: **11th Hour**. Pastor: Reuben Weaver.
- Crestview Baptist Church, Farmerville: **Family Crusade**, June 10-13. Evangelist: **2TALK42 Ministries**. Pastor: Wayne Whiteside.

LAGNIAPPE

- **Patrick Cobbs** is available for supply or interim in District Eight and Northwest Baptist Associations. Short notice is accepted. You can call him at 318.422.9990.
- Holden Baptist Church, Holden: **Rededication service**, June 3, 10:45 a.m. Pastor: Russell Hinson.
- Genesis Church, Denham Springs: **Partnership Celebration**, June 3, 10:10 a.m. Pastor: Jeff Smith.
- First Baptist Church, Bogalusa: **Christian Fine Arts Academy**, weekly in June, 1-4 p.m. Registration is open for the summer. Music lessons for piano, voice and flute begin June 4. To register or to get more information, call the church office at 985.732.3756. Pastor: Greg Whaley.
- Alto Baptist Church, Alto: **Vacation Bible School**, June 2, 8:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. for ages Pre-K through 5th grade. The theme is Polar Blast - Where God's Love Is Cool. For more information contact Sandy Miller, 318.623.4444. Pastor: Alan

- Miller.
- New Prospect Baptist Church, Dry Prong: **Vacation Bible School – Babylon: Daniel's Courage in Captivity**, June 3-8, 5-8 p.m. This is for children ages 3 years old – through sixth grade. To register online, go to vbspro.events/p/nphc2018. Pastor: Trey Lewis.
- First Baptist Church, Many: **Vacation Bible School**, June 3-7, 5-8 p.m. All kids who have completed Pre-K and thru sixth grade are encouraged to come be athletes and get in the game on God's team. Pastor: Jonathan Bost.
- Fifth Ward Baptist Church, Marksville: **Vacation Bible School – Game On**, June 3-7, 5:45-8:30 p.m. Pastor: Keith Lamartiniere.
- Ouachita Baptist Church, West Monroe: **Vacation Bible School**, June 3-7, 6-8:30 p.m. Pastor: Mike Holloway.
- Fair Park Baptist Church, West Monroe: **Gear up! Get Ready! Game on! Vacation Bible School**, June 3 (VBS Prep Night), VBS, June 4-8. All children pre-K 3 through 5th grade are invited to attend. Pastor: Waymond Warren.
- First Baptist Church, Pineville: **First@First Business Leader Luncheon**, June 4, noon. Speaker: **Jeff Draughon**, partner and co-founder of LPL Financial. Cost: \$10 and you may pay at the door. Please RSVP to Stewart Holloway (sholloway@fbcpineville.net.) Pastor: Stewart Holloway.
- First Baptist Church, Bossier: **Vacation Bible School – Summer Survivor: Road Trip**; June 4-6, 6-9 p.m. It's nonstop fun for kids who have completed Kindergarten through 5th grade. Pastor: Brad Jurkovich.
- Sale Street Baptist Church, Lake Charles: **Vacation Bible School - Game On!**; June 4-8; 8:30 a.m. – noon. All children Pre-K 3 through 5th grade are invited to attend VBS. To register a child or to volunteer, visit salestreet.org/vbs. Pastor: Randy Edwards.
- First Baptist Church, Calhoun: **Vacation Bible School**, June 4-8, 9 a.m.- noon. Pastor: Neil Everett.
- First Baptist Church, Ruston: **Vacation Bible School – Game On**, June 4-8, 9 a.m. – noon. For children completed kindergarten – through fifth grade. Register online at www.fbcruston.life. For more information call the church office at 318.255.4628. Pastor: Chris Craig.
- First Baptist Church, Swartz: **Vacation Bible School**, June 4-8, 8:30 a.m.-noon. Pastor: Aaron Dickinson.
- Highland Baptist Church, West Monroe: **Vacation Bible School**, June 4-8, 8 a.m.-noon. Early drop off for VBS is 7:30 a.m. during the week of June 4 – 8. Ages 4 through grade 8 are invited. Registration is open online at highwest.net. Pastor: Gordon Dean.
- Philadelphia Baptist Church, Deville: **Vacation Bible School 2018**, June 4-8, 6-8:30 p.m. All children, kindergarten through sixth grade, are welcome. You may pre-register online at pbc-ministry.com. Pastor: Philip Robertson.
- Cedar Crest Baptist Church, West Monroe: **Vacation Bible School**, June 4-8, 8:30 a.m.-noon. Opened to kids kindergarten through 5th grade. Pastor: Greg Clark.
- Mt. Vernon Baptist Church, West Monroe: **Vacation Bible School**, June 4-8 6-8:30 p.m. Pastor: Randy Burdeaux
- First Baptist Church, Covington: **Vacation Bible School – Game On!**; June 4-8, 8:30 a.m.- noon. For children who have completed Kindergarten through 6th grades. For more information, please contact Maggie at mfredericks@fbccov.org. Pastor: Waylon Bailey.



Submitted photo

Pastor Clark Stewart (center) congratulates Joshua (Josh) Fauntleroy (left), and his wife Abbey (Gaspard) Fauntleroy following Fauntleroy's ordination to the gospel ministry by New Zion Baptist Church, Covington April 15. A life-long member of New Zion Baptist Church, Fauntleroy, who was licensed to preach in August 2017, has shared God's Word numerous times at New Zion, **Bogging for Christ and Blessing of the Hunt**. He has been called by God to serve as an evangelist.

- First Baptist Church, Lafayette: **Vacation Bible School – Game On!**; June 4-8, 9 a.m.-noon. Children who have completed first through sixth grade are invited to participate. Pastor: Steve Horn.
- North Monroe Baptist Church, Monroe: **Vacation Bible School**, June 4-8, 8:30 a.m.-noon. Grades K – 4 will enjoy VBS while grades 5 – 6 attend VBX. Pastor: Bill Dye.
- Cypress Baptist Church, Benton: **Vacation Bible School**, June 4-8; 8:45 a.m. - 12:15 p.m. Free for all kids entering kindergarten through completed 5th grade. Pastor: John Fream.
- First Baptist Church, Ruston: **Vacation Bible School – Gearing Up For Life's Big Game!**; June 4-8, 9 a.m – noon. Register at fbcruston.life/vbs-2018. Pastor: Chris Craig.
- Delacroix Hope Baptist Church, St. Bernard: **Walk in Victory Vacation Bible Fun**, June 4-7, 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Kids, ages K-5 through going into 6th grade, will enjoy bible stories, crafts, music, recreation, and snacks. Free lunch provided. Parents and friends are welcome. For more information, contact Phil or Debbie Smith at 504-400-4095, Phil.Debbie@WeeCanKnow.org. Pastor: Paul Hussey.
- Cherry Ridge Baptist Church, Bastrop: **Vacation Bible School**, June 10-14, 5-8 p.m. Pastor: Dennis Hackler.
- Cheniere Baptist Church, West Monroe: **Vacation Bible School**, June 10-15, 5-8 p.m. Pastor: Zac Anderson.
- Westside Baptist Church, Natchitoches: **Vacation Bible School – Shipwrecked, Rescued**

- by Jesus, June 11-15, 8 a.m.-noon. Pastor: Steve McAlister.
- New Bethlehem Baptist Church, Denham Springs: **Vacation Bible School – Shipwrecked, Rescued by Jesus**, June 11-15, 6-8:30 p.m. The age group for VBS includes all students entering K-4 through the sixth grade next school year. Pastor: Carl Sullivan.
- First Baptist Church, Sterlington: **Vacation Bible School**, June 11-15 5:30-8:00 p.m. Children who have completed grades K – 5 are invited. Online registration is available on the church website at www.fbcsterlington.com. Pastor: Ben Hackler.
- Longview Baptist Church, Deville: **Vacation Bible School**, June 11-15, 8:30-11:30 a.m. Pastor: Robby Poole.
- First Baptist Church, West Monroe: **Vacation Bible School - Amped – Live Fully Alive** is for children, age 4 by June 1 through completed grade 5, June 11-15, 9 a.m.-noon. Pastor: Michael Wood.
- First Baptist Church, Winnsboro: **Vacation Bible School – Game On**, June 11-15, 9 a.m. – noon. This is for kids age 5 through the fifth grade. Pastor: Craig Beeman.
- First Baptist Church, Bastrop: **Vacation Bible School**, June 11-15, 5:30-8:30 p.m. Pastor: Richard Gambill.
- HIS Church, Pineville: **Vacation Bible School – Game On**, June 11-15, Ages 4 years through the sixth grade grade. For the younger students (4 year olds through the fourth grade) VBS will be 9-12 a.m. and for the older students (fifth and sixth graders) will have VBX from 6-7:30 p.m. Pastor: Steve Speer.
- New Chapel Hill Baptist Church, West Monroe: **Vacation Bible School**, June 11-15, 8:30 a.m. – noon. Pastor: Marty Black.
- North Monroe Baptist Church, Bastrop: **Vacation Bible School**, June 11-15, 5:30-8:30 p.m. Pastor: Bill Dye.

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.

byh mpj dprxhqjy wl roqbjx dqrjh kymw mpj xwqh:

lwq pj pbh yryj pkyhqjh dpbqrmw wl rqwy: byh

mgjymc cjbqo pj zrnpmrxc wuuqjoojh mpj dprxhqjy

wl roqbjx.

tkhnjo lwkq:mpqjj

Clues:
X = L; J = E

Answer to May 17 Scripture Crypto:
Matthew seventeen:fifteen



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SUNDAY, JUNE 10

at First Baptist Church in downtown Dallas!

Services at 9:15 & 10:50 a.m.


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Dr. Robert Jeffress, Senior Pastor,
First Baptist Dallas

O.S. Hawkins will preach in both morning worship services.

First Baptist Dallas is located at 1707 San Jacinto Street,
one mile from the Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center.