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for others,
following the
example of
Christ ...”*

– Ephesians 5:2
(TLB)

LOUISIANA BAPTIST Message

Newsjournal for Louisiana Baptists

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April 21, 2016

An adult leader prays with a young man as he accepts Christ as his personal Savior and Lord during the recent RA Congress at Tall Timbers Conference Center. Fourteen RAs made professions of faith during the Saturday session of the event.

Brian Blackwell
photo



Ex-Soviet satellite ripe for harvest

BY BRIAN BLACKWELL
Message Staff Writer

Louisiana Baptists have a golden opportunity – bring the Gospel to a former Soviet founding republic whose population is just 1 percent evangelical.

Although Belarus has few believers among the population of 9.6 million, it does not mean the people are closed to the message of Jesus Christ, those behind this Gospel movement contend.

Jeff Ingram, senior adult strategist for Louisiana Baptists, has participated in previous mission trips to Belarus and plans on going again in May. He said once a person travels to the country, the people find a place in your heart.

“After going twice, I see a real open field for the Gospel,” said Jeff Ingram, adult ministry strategist for Louisiana Baptists. “People have lived without hope for so long that they are desperate for Christ.

“Belarus’ people and pastors feel like they have been forgotten by the rest of the world,” he continued. “Just our presence is a huge

Experiencing a ‘holy spirit’ moment

Fourteen make decisions for Christ at RA Congress

BY BRIAN BLACKWELL
Message Staff Writer

WOODWORTH – The recent RA Congress concluded with truly a Holy Spirit moment during the Saturday morning session according to Gibbie McMillan, state director for Royal Ambassadors.

After offering an invitation to come

forward and accept Christ, McMillan watched as 14 young men made their way to the front of the Tall Timbers Conference Center activities building. Only the Holy Spirit could have orchestrated that moment, McMillan believes.

“We had a very great opportunity right there to see those boys come to Christ,” McMillan said. “It’s a moment where we present the Gospel to them and they respond in a way of the Holy Spirit drawing them to a point of decision.

“It’s always an exciting time to see the Holy Spirit move in this way,” he said. “Seeing the boys come forward to make a decision is why we do ministry.”

McMillan said the decisions resulted from seeds being intentionally planted, cultivated and harvested.

“That’s the end result,” McMillan said. “This is an example of why it’s vitally important the Gospel be presented at every opportunity.”

See **MOMENT** on 3

See **BELARUS** on 7

Calvary Baptist School in New Orleans headmaster and pastor Michael Carney and Laekan Carter, the school’s children’s coordinator and a chapel teacher prepare to baptise 11-year-old Liam Leslie in front of the entire student body.



‘Special’ call leads to ‘special’ baptism

BY MARILYN STEWART
Regional Reporter

NEW ORLEANS – The phone call Alexis Leslie received from Calvary Baptist School in New Orleans last year began with words every parent loves to hear.

“I have awesome news,” Leslie said the principal told her. But when Leslie heard her 11-year-old son Liam had made a commitment to follow Christ, she was not sure she understood.

“I’ll be honest with you, I don’t know a whole lot about the Baptist religion. I’m Catholic,” Leslie

See **CALL** on 2

Call from page one

said. "I really wasn't quite sure what 'saved' meant."

The unusual phone call was followed by an unusual baptism when Liam Leslie, a fifth-grader, was baptized Oct. 28 in front of the entire student body, K-8th grade.

The school is a ministry of Calvary Baptist Church in New Orleans, and when a Sunday morning baptism could not be worked out, the church approved the baptism during school hours, a first for the school.

"We couldn't seem to find a perfect fit for a Sunday baptism date with the family," said

Laekan Carter, the school's children's coordinator and a chapel teacher. "Liam asked me weekly, for months, when he could be baptized."

Liam's commitment to Christ had come months earlier after Carter had shared during a school chapel program what it meant "to have a relationship with Christ." When the children were invited to approach her with questions, Liam wrote out a note asking Carter what the phrase "relationship with Christ" meant.

As Carter met with Liam and answered his questions, she realized he was being moved



Marilyn Stewart photo

Students from Calvary Baptist School in New Orleans attend chapel the day before 11-year-old classmate Liam Leslie was baptized before the whole school.

by Jesus' love for him.

"What resonated with Liam was that he was created for a purpose and that God's Son would die for him," Carter

said. "The magnitude of Jesus' sacrifice made an impression on him."

For Liam's parents, baptism in a pool baptistery was something they had never before seen, Leslie said.

"I was a nervous wreck," she confessed. "I put myself in his position as to how nervous I would be [to be baptized] in front of all my classmates. I asked Liam if he was nervous. He said, 'A little bit.'"

Pastor and school headmaster Michael Carney, aided by Carter, performed the baptism in a ceremony that Leslie described as "beautiful." Though Leslie said the family has not been active in church, she was glad her son wanted "Christ in his life." Leslie said a sister in Alabama who is Baptist also helped her understand what Liam's commitment and request to be baptized meant.

"When they told me, I didn't realize it was that big

of a deal. Since then I've come to find out that it is a big deal," Leslie said. She added that when her son asked to be baptized, she "immediately" said yes.

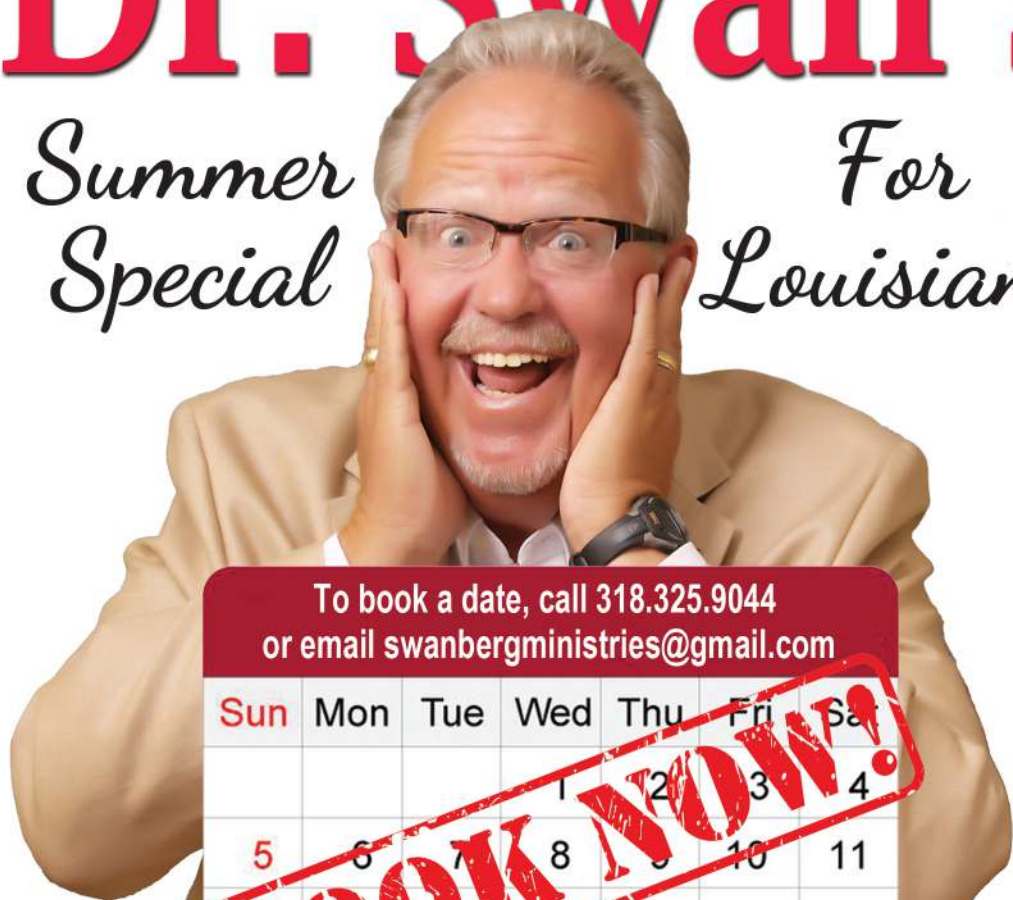
The day of the baptism, Carney explained to the students its meaning and purpose. In addition, an accompanying video provided an explanation geared toward children.

"My students were so excited to watch the baptism," said Jennie Gartman, a second-grade teacher. "Afterwards, there were lots of questions about why he was baptized."

Carter said Liam Leslie has a sweet, teachable spirit.

"It was an honor to be a part of that and to see it impact our community," Carter said. "It was a privilege to walk with [Liam], sharing Jesus with him and seeing him baptized, but also walking with him and discipling him and watching him grow."

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Moment from page one

Dustin Lee, children's minister at First Baptist Lafayette, was able to lead one of the boys in his group to Christ at RA Congress. Lee said the weekly RA meetings at the church played a part in the young man making a decision to accept Jesus as his personal Savior and Lord.

"Leading one of my kids to Christ is my favorite part of being a children's minister," Lee said. "It's also incredible when you get to disciple the new believer and family and have the privilege to baptize them."

Held April 8-9, RA Congress drew 200 RAs from 12 churches. Seven more churches had registered but were unable to come because of the recent flooding.

The two-day conference featured competitions such as archery, BB guns, obstacle course, rope craft and log-sawing, as well as the opportunity to launch a rocket as part of the "Take Flight" theme of the event, based on Psalm 104:4.

RA Congress also included Pinewood Derby and Soap Box

car races.

For both competition, participants competed in a series of heats to determine a first place winner for each grade level. These victors advanced to the finals to determine the top three overall champions.

Pinewood Derby Champions:

First Place – Asher Jones, First Baptist Lafayette

Second Place – James Basco, Kingsville Baptist, Pineville

Third Place – Thomas Garbarino, First Baptist Lafayette

Soap Box Derby Champions:

First Place Fastest Crusader – Caleb Savoie, First Lafayette.

First Place Fastest Lad -- Ethan Savoie, First Lafayette.

The weekend also featured breakout sessions led by missionaries, including Randy Hales, director of missions for Bienville & Webster-Claiborne Baptist Associations and Philip Vandercook, director of Global Maritime Ministries in New Orleans.

The annual Louisiana Baptist event allows the boys



Brian Blackwell photo

Adults leaders counsel young men who made a decision to accept Christ during RA Congress. Fourteen boys made a salvation decision during the annual gathering at Tall Timbers Conference Center.

to experience activities they normally might not participate in, said RA consultant Mike Collie.

"Seeing dads get so excited about their sons doing things out here is always a highlight," Collie said. "This camp out allows the boys to be a part of something that will hopefully stay with them for many years to come."

Watching the race cars come down the lane "at super, fast speeds" was a highlight for Jackson Stafford. His dad,

Logan, said spending time with his son was a highlight of his weekend.

"Coming out here to spend time with the boys and getting them engaged with missionaries was worth it," said Stafford, a member at First Baptist Pineville. "RA Congress reminds them of the need to learn about cultures and spreading the message of Christ to other parts of the world."

Robert Vicknair, an RA leader from First Baptist

Ponchatoula, said RA Congress leaves the boys with an excitement and passion to learn more about Christ and what missionaries do.

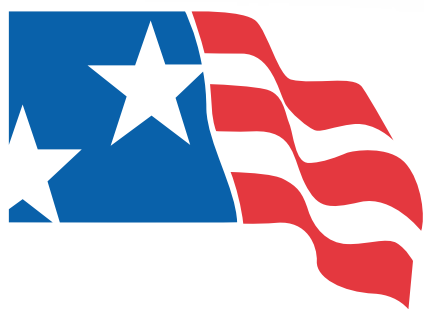
"This gives them a jumpstart in the real world, which is important," he said. "Events like this also allow the boys to get around other believers and make friends that can be a positive influence on them."

For information on starting an RA chapter, call 318.448.3402.

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Brewer hits one-year milestone as Louisiana College president

BY NORM MILLER
LC News

PINEVILLE – On March 5, 2015, the Louisiana College Board of Trustees unanimously elected Rick Brewer as the ninth president of LC.

He officially took office April 7, and immediately began sharing his vision for the college with trustees, faculty, staff, students and local media, saying he initially would “listen, learn and lead.”

Brewer did lots of listening, meeting with small groups on campus that represented LC’s various academic and administrative leaders and members.

REACHING OUT

Proving his claim to be student-centric, Brewer – on the night of his election – met with students for coffee and

conversation in the inaugural “Brewing with Brewer” get-together, and, he has kept this focus with a constant presence at student activities.

From Tennessee to Texas and across the Bayou State, Brewer has met with alumni groups, has preached, led worship, played piano concerts, and met with pastors, parents and prospective students – all the while listening carefully to the heartbeat of the Louisiana College family.

Undaunted by the vestige of problems that hampered the college in the years just prior to his arrival, Brewer used the listening sessions for assessment, planning and to develop rebuilding strategies.

“I discovered a vast group of people who love Louisiana College deeply, and who are willing to move the college forward again,” Brewer said.

MOVING FORWARD

And move forward it has. LC’s stakeholders have rallied around Brewer and adopted his vision for preparing graduates and transforming lives. Since Brewer’s arrival, the college has received more than \$5 million in gifts, which is in addition to funds received through the Cooperative Program of the Louisiana Baptist Convention.

“I could not be more thankful for the faithful and continual support of LBC churches, who embrace the vital role the college serves in educating students with curricula that are based on a Christian worldview and are relevant, relational and rigorous,” Brewer said.

TOP PRIORITY

Job number one for Brewer was answering accreditation concerns. Brewer and his administrative team accomplished that, and LC’s pro-



Louisiana College photo

Louisiana College President Rick Brewer has made great strides in his first year on the job at LC.

bation was lifted December 2015.

Brewer wasted no time in making good on his emphasis regarding faith integration.

Pushing faith integration to the forefront, Brewer inaugurated a summer reading project last year for faculty and incoming freshmen.

Faculty read “Conceiving the Christian College” and freshmen read “Why College Matters to God.”

“Our goal is to ensure students gain maturity of intellect and maturity of Christian character,” he said. “If we fail at either, we have failed at both.”

Brewer also developed faith integration training workshops for LC faculty, staff, and coaches, and has continued to emphasize faith integration as reflected in LC’s hiring processes and the newly instituted requirement for faculty and staff to attend chapel.

BUILDING A TEAM

In restructuring the college’s senior leadership team, Brewer assigned enrollment management responsibilities to Brandon Bannon, who remains vice president for student development.

One year ago, LC’s spring preview day garnered about 36 attendees. The spring 2016 preview day saw more than 100 prospective students visit the campus along with their families.

“Dr. Bannon’s energy and innovation has made Louisiana College competitive again,” Brewer said. “Brandon has helped us turn the corner and put us back on the growth trajectory.”

Last summer, LC partnered with Rapides Parish School Board in a dual enrollment agreement that allows quali-

See BREWER on 6

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Tyler Dixon: Louisiana College's go-to guy on and off the field

By BRAD WELBORN

LCWildcats.net

PINEVILLE — Across this country from high school to the major leagues there is that one special player who contributes more than just numbers to a team.

Each provides more than just stats — an at-bat, innings-pitched or on-base-percentages.

Some take to heart the role of being a sounding board for the younger players on the team, which at times, can be far more important than driving in a winning run or pitching a perfect game.

Louisiana College's Tyler Dixon is one of those special players. His contributions show in the influence and the relationships he has cultivated over their years with his teammates.

"I didn't realize how hard it was going to be to play college baseball until going into my senior year of high school. I played summer ball and went to a lot of showcases and stuff, but I think God orchestrated everything the way He did for a reason for me to come here," said Dixon, an accounting major who will graduate this May from LC.

"When he leaves this program it's not going to be about statistics. It's going to be about what he was able to teach our young players," said head baseball coach Mike Byrnes, "and what he was able to learn from our older players when he was young."

"He's just carrying on the tradition of being a quality student-athlete and athlete-student at Louisiana College," said Byrnes.

While playing baseball and going to class at LC these last four years, Tyler has been able to create lasting memories and friendships that otherwise may not have happened. He has also developed relationships that not only grown his faith but has also impacted the lives of his teammates.

"When I first got to Louisiana College, there was a guy named Will Courier, who was a year ahead of me," said Dixon. "From the first time I met him, I could tell he was the real deal. We clicked and became best friends."

"Getting to hang out with him was a real eye opener and he helped me grow," said Dixon. "God also began to open my eyes to a lot more things, a lot of opportunities, and showed me there was plenty of room for me to grow."

One of the traditions on the LC baseball team is for an upperclassman to host a weekly Bible study, one that Tyler has attended every week since his freshman year. It has had a definite impact on his life and the lives of his teammates,

including one who made a life-changing decision at a study.

"There's this one guy who transferred in from Texas and we kept inviting him to Bible study and one night he came," said Dixon, "and he gave his life to God right there."

"He told me, 'I got invited to go to the bar tonight but there was something different about you all and I wanted to see what it was all about.' He gave his life to God and now he's conducting his own Bible study every week," said Dixon.

Tyler continually strives to lead by example for his teammates and for those back home in Walker.

"Ever since high school, I have always thought if God gave me the ability or chance to play college baseball I would use that stage, whether it was big or small, and try to point it to Him," Dixon said. "Every game day since my freshman year, I post a game-day scripture and I'll put it on Twitter and Instagram."

"Regardless of what happens," Dixon continued, "I'm going to praise Him when we

win and praise Him when we lose. If He is going to let me play baseball then I'm going to make sure He is recognized. I want God to be recognized in all things I do."

His years at Louisiana College have created countless memories — times spent with the team on road trips, bar-b-ques on the weekends, playing golf with his best friends who just so happen to be his teammates.

"Those are the moments I'm going to miss the most," Dixon said. "I'm content with hanging everything up; I think once it's all done; I don't think I'm going to miss the lights, I'll miss the people and the relationships."

Although this season has seen its share of adversity, Tyler said he is excited for the future of the program and plans on keeping in close touch after graduation with his teammates and friends he has made over the last four years.

"We have a great group of guys and I'm thankful for each



Jordan Meisner photo

Senior, left-handed pitcher Tyler Dixon is just one of three seniors for the Wildcats who are 9-20 overall and 4-11 in ASC play this year.

See DIXON on 7

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Brewer from page 4

fied high school students to enroll at the college to simultaneously earn both high school and college credit.

The School of Nursing is significant to the college's academic and professional offerings and Brewer hired Marilyn Cooksey to succeed the previous dean.

"Dr. Cooksey demonstrates true academic excellence coupled with a biblical commitment to compassionate care," Brewer said. "As expected, Marilyn has brought a welcome and healthy perspective to our School of Nursing."

BOARD OF VISITORS

Launching a Board of Visitors last summer, Brewer effectively built a coalition of alumni, professionals, business leaders, pastors and other friends of LC committed to support a scholarship fund that goes wholly and solely to qualified students. He has added several staff and faculty as members, expanding the board to 78.

"Without the capable assistance of Byron McGee, our Board of Visitors would not be growing at such a pace,"

Brewer said. McGee, whose employment at LC spans three decades, has built hundreds of relationships. "His knowledge and expertise in friend-raising is vital in his new role as vice president of institutional advancement."

Though students will benefit from the BOV's scholarship fund, the "total impact of our BOV members is priceless as they pray for the college, mentor students, and serve as ambassadors for LC," Brewer said.

The addition of Kathy Overturf as director of alumni relations "has re-energized and brought new enthusiasm to our alumni base," Brewer said.

Brewer hired Reni Mason as head men's basketball coach. Though Mason took the Wildcats to a conference championship game in his first year, "Reni is equally committed to the academic, athletic and spiritual development of our student-athletes," Brewer said.

FORMING A COALITION

Early last fall Brewer inked a partnership agreement along with Les Guice, president of



Philip Timothy photo

Louisiana College President Rick Brewer announced Dec. 8 during a live newscast on KALB, an Alexandria TV station, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges had removed the probationary status from LC's accreditation.

Louisiana Tech, that provides qualified students the opportunity to gain two bachelor's degrees in five years. Students may complete a pre-Engineering degree at LC before matriculating to Louisiana Tech.

More recently, Louisiana College and University Academy – a local, independent high school – signed a dual enrollment agreement allowing UA students to attend classes at LC.

CAMPUS UPGRADES

Brewer has led the way in

improving the college's facilities and infrastructure.

Residence halls have been remodeled, roads have been repaired, air conditioning units and roofs have been replaced, and new greenery surrounds the college's fountain.

"All of these efforts represent a cohesive strategy to prepare graduates and transform lives," said Brewer, while noting his gratitude for his senior administrative staff.

"I am also grateful for LC's Board of Trustees, who have wholeheartedly embraced our

mission and vision," Brewer said.

GAINING TRUST

Throughout his travels, Brewer continues to meet people who express their appreciation for his arrival at LC and for the course he has set. "I cannot count the number of personal comments, letters, phone calls, emails, cards and letters from those who endorse what we are doing at Louisiana College," he said. "The frequency, diversity and sincerity of such approval tell me we are heading in the right direction."

"We thank God for all of these accolades and accomplishments. Greater than all of these, however, are the students who have recommitted their lives to Christ or have come to faith in Christ for the first time. God is at work at Louisiana College, and I am both humbled and grateful for what he is doing."

"Cathy and I are thankful to God for allowing us to do what we love," Brewer added. "We know you will thank God as we thank you, the Louisiana College family, for your prayers and financial support. Rejoice with us as we celebrate what God is accomplishing at Louisiana College."

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Aguillard has President Emeritus title removed by LC Board



Joe Aguillard

BY NORM MILLER
LC Communications

PINEVILLE – The Louisiana College Board of Trustees acted April 12 to remove the title of President Emeritus from Joe Aguillard, who served as president of the college from 2005 until 2014.

Aguillard had previously been removed from his tenured faculty position on the recommendation of the Faculty Affairs Advisory Committee following a hearing at which violations of the LC Faculty Handbook and charges were considered.

The dismissal was upheld by the Executive Committee of the college's Board of Trustees following a lengthy appeal hearing.

The matters that led to Aguillard's dismissal from the LC faculty were of paramount consideration in the determination by the Board of Trustees to remove the honorary title of president emeritus which had been given at the time of Aguillard's replacement as president in 2014.

Randy Harper, Chairman of the Louisiana College Board of Trustees, speaking for the Board and the cur-

rent administration, said all LC stakeholders should be assured school policy and procedures were meticulously followed throughout the dismissal and appeal proceedings.

Louisiana College officials are not expected to have further comment on the matter.

Aguillard did not return several phone messages by the *Baptist Message* seeking comment Tuesday.

Dixon from page 5

and every one of them," Dixon said. "We've had our share of struggles from the start but every one of these guys comes to practice every day ready to go to work and try to improve."

"Their mindset and attitude has made it a lot easier

for us upperclassmen," Dixon continued. "These guys are the hardest working team we've had throughout my time here. They have certainly made this senior year a special one for me. If not this year, look for big things from this program in the near future."

Belarus from page one

encouragement for the pastors and church members. The government and the people are more open to the Gospel than they have been in 100 years."

Since 2015, Louisiana Baptist churches have participated in mission teams in the country, in partnership with Byelorussian Mission. By 2018, plans are to have visited all six provinces in Belarus, at a rate of two per year.

Once in Belarus, the mission teams will train pastors and distribute the Word.

Pastors will learn how to disciple their members and effectively lead small groups.

Ingram and Andrew Ryzhkov, founder of Byelorussian Mission, Inc., is working with LifeWay Christian Resources and Blackaby Ministries to secure the copyright to print Experiencing God in the Russian language.

Teams also will give out copies of a Good & Evil il-

lustrated Bible story. Next year is the 500-year anniversary of the printing of the Bible in the Belarusian language.

Wayne Sheppard, executive assistant to the executive director, and, also the partnerships coordinator for Louisiana Baptists, said this is an effective way to present the Gospel to the people, at a cost of \$10 a Bible. He is hoping Louisiana Baptists, even if they aren't participating in a mission trip there, will consider purchasing one or more of the Bibles for distribution in

the country.

"The Bibles tell a story, from creation to Christ," Sheppard said. "Forty percent of those who read this Bible will give their lives to Christ. We are challenging churches in Louisiana to step up and purchase these Bibles."

After the vision trips are complete, Sheppard hopes Louisiana Baptist churches will continue sending mission teams into the country. Ryzhkov, the

See BELARUS on 12

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Haiti mission center one step closer to being reality

By BRIAN BLACKWELL

Message Staff Writer

ALEXANDRIA – The vision to build an orphanage and church planting center in Haiti is closer to becoming reality, after a deal was finalized to purchase land for the proposed campus.

“I am exhilarated that we have reached this stage,” said Wayne Sheppard, executive assistant to the executive director, and partnership missions strategist for Louisiana Baptists. “This process has been long, but it is all according to His timing. The Lord has directed each step, and we have watched Him grant a secure footing with amazing opportunity. Louisiana Baptists are focused on raising up Daniels and Esthers in Haiti and on planting churches to help win thousands to Jesus Christ.”

Sheppard traveled to the country in early March to sign papers for the 3.1 acres of land.

The next step is building

a deep-water well and a wall that will surround the property – projects Sheppard expects to be completed sometime in the spring.

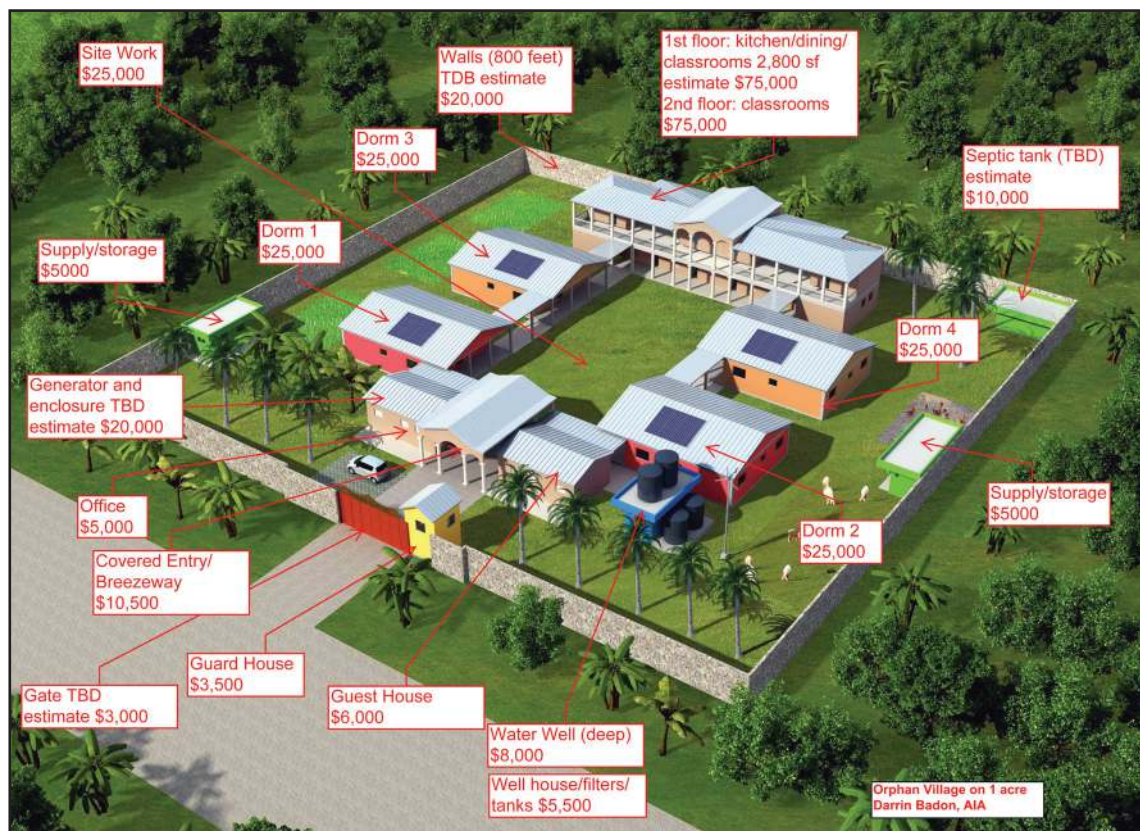
“The well will not only provide water for the children at the facility but also will allow others from the community to get water too,” Sheppard said. “In Haiti, having good, healthy drinking water is a premium. Providing pure healthy water will allow the opportunity for many to experience the Living Water.”

Once funds are raised, construction on the children’s village can begin, and he hopes to break ground for that phase no later than the fall.

The Haiti project is an effort sponsored by the Haitian Baptist Convention, 30 Louisiana Baptist churches and the Louisiana Baptist Children’s Home.

Haiti was devastated by a Jan. 12, 2010, earthquake that killed more than 250,000 people and left hundreds of

thousands homeless. Louisiana Baptists were among the first to provide disaster relief soon after the earthquake and that effort has continued through the ministry center partnership, including: construction projects, pastor training, medical clinics, evangelism and children’s Bible clubs (Vacation Bible School).



The hope is to build a housing community next, followed with the development of micro businesses and trade schools. As the project expands, there is a plan to construct a hotel, operated by Haitians, and a school for educating the children.

Church plants will be a pivotal part of the work, and this ministry center will be the base from which Louisiana Baptists partner with Haitian believers to reach all of Haiti by starting churches.

Ron and Alana Greenwich, retired missionaries currently residing in Minden, have been hired to take a major leadership

role in this work. They will coordinate mission trips, build awareness among Louisiana Baptists, help with fundraising, and oversee the development of the children’s village.

If you would like to contribute financially to the project, make donations to “Creative Ministries, LAReachHaiti” through the Louisiana Baptist Foundation (P. O. Box 311, Alexandria LA 71309).

For more information, including details about the upcoming Oct. 15-21 Haiti mission trip, contact Ron Greenwich at rongreenwich@gmail.com .

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Louisiana Baptist women urged to reach the lost for Christ

By JAMIE STEPHENS

Regional Reporter

WOODWORTH – Speakers encouraged more than 175 ladies representing 70 different churches and 26 associations to pray and listen as they seek to reach the lost in Louisiana and around the world.

The women gathered April 1-2 for the 116th annual Women's Missionary Union meeting, held this year at Tall Timbers Conference Center, to hear a number of messages around the theme of "opened eyes to follow" based on Matthew 20:32-34.

THE LORD'S ARMY

"You are a mighty army of Southern Baptist women who are steady and intent on serving the Lord through missions," said Louisiana Baptist Convention Executive Director David Hankins in welcoming the attendees to the annual meeting.

Referencing 2 Kings 6:13-20, Hankins recalled Elisha's prayer for the young servant.

"We should be driven to our knees in prayer as we reach out to younger generations. We must open our eyes to the cross, to the Promise, to the potential, and to the next generation so that the following generations can have their eyes opened to the Lord," said Hankins.

Prior to Hankins' remarks, attendees took part in several breakout sessions about engaging the younger generations and a variety of other topics, including the Baptist Nursing Fellowship, the poverty level in the state, family missions, defining mission discipleship and the sharing of ideas on how to begin a mission organization.

"Our churches are full of women searching for ways to become engaged in missions discipleship that reflects the Great Commission," said Janie Wise, LBC's Women's Missions and Ministry Strategist. "We were challenged by all of the speakers throughout the weekend."

MISSIONARY FORCES

Kaitlyn Robinson, the myMission leader at the Louisiana Tech Baptist Collegiate Ministry, shared how God led her out of her comfort zone and into a leadership role to encourage others students on campus to be on mission.



Brian Blackwell photo

New WMU officers were elected at its annual meeting. They are: Top row, left to right – Brenda Blackman, Scholarship Committee (FBC Lafayette); Helen Baxter (Recording Secretary, (FBC, Ruston); Rhonda Berry, Assistant Recording Secretary, (Woodridge, Shreveport); Mary Floyd, Scholarship Committee, (First Pecan Island, Kaplan). Bottom Row, left to right – Julia Parker, Scholarship Committee (Calvary, Alexandria); Dot Chappelle, Vice-President, (Pleasant Grove, Jonesville); Cameron Mullins, President (FBC, Lafayette); Cathy Jenkins, Scholarship Committee (Baptist Bible, Shreveport).

Greg Shyne, a church planter at United Outreach Church in Shreveport, stressed the need for teamwork in a church plant, how it involves a pastor and people, and much prayer and support of sponsor churches. He also shared how God has the power to lead growth and support for new plants.

On Saturday, two International Mission Board missionaries on stateside assignment were recognized by the WMU for their work on the mission field overseas.

John D* said, "It is important to be obedient to Christ. You must obey Christ with eyes wide open."

He reminded everyone of the two blind men in Matthew 9:27-31 who begged Jesus to have mercy on them. They wanted to see, and He healed them.

"When we have a disease or deformity that stops us from performing, we are dumped off by society. We are forced into a life of begging. The blind men saw this encounter with Him as an opportunity to be fixed, not to be given money, but to see!"

The missionary explained how after Jesus told them to tell no one, they only aspired to follow Him instead of trying to follow their former desires and dreams. None of their past aspirations mattered anymore.

"It's not about what we gain from Him, but how we begin to crave His love. Our lives are not just a season of obedience but a lifetime of keeping our faith and focusing on Christ," he explained.

believe that remaining centered in God's will is the safest place to live.

He added that he believes it is better to be spiritually safe than physically safe.

George Ross – with his wife Joy and their children – was called to a different mission field and he now serves as the North American Mission Board's SEND Missionary in New Orleans.

He was pastoring a church in North Mississippi when God called him to his new role, and Ross explained how lonely he felt early on with his new ministry assignment.

He said he felt like no one

needed or wanted him, but that God whispered to him that He wanted him there.

"Many times, we wish we were living different lives, but we are actually shaking our fingers at God. God calls us to be like Jesus and to make disciples for His Kingdom and glory. It has been very difficult but worth it. We are called to live for Christ verbally and passionately."

PRODIGAL DAUGHTER

Heather Stracener, a women's ministry team leader at

See WMU on 11

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WMU from page 9

Philadelphia Baptist Church in Deville, gave a compelling testimony.

Introduced as a “prodigal daughter of obedience,” she shared how God opened her eyes to her rebellion of binge drinking for 15 years and living in bars. Her drinking caused her to lose her children, which was devastating, she said.

Only through compassion and encouragement from her dad and the Lord were her eyes finally opened to reconciliation. She was saved in August 2010 and God has been molding her ever since.

FINISH WELL

The WMU had hoped to be able to hold its annual meeting in the Georgia Barnette Conference Center at Tall Timbers however the facility is still several months from completion.

“Although we have had various special celebrations throughout the years, this is the first time we have held our celebration at Tall Timbers, and we were able to hold our entire WMU meeting at the conference center,” said Wise. “In years to come we hope we will be able to have it all in the newly completed center.

“We challenged everyone to help us finish the building,” Wise said, “especially the Memorial Prayer Garden, by purchasing pavers and bricks.”

* name changed

LOUISIANA NOTABLES

IN REMEMBRANCE

■ **Jeffrey L. Woodrich**, 57, passed away April 4. An accomplished carpenter, painter, and cabinet maker, the lifelong resident of Walker took those skills on the road when the Lord called him into the ministry. He and his wife started Louisiana Volunteer Mission Builders, which later turned into Jeffrey Woodrich Baptist Builders. He worked for the Louisiana Baptist Convention for 17 years as the associate and then Mission Builder Strategist building numerous church buildings across the state. He is survived by his wife of 22 years, Erin Dawn Higginbotham Woodrich, his three sons, Toby Keith and wife Amanda and their two boys Jordan and Kyle; Cory James and his wife Sarah and their daughter Elena Belle; and Jeffrey Andrew Woodrich; his mother, Melba Janette Woodrich; his sister, Deborah Ann McMorris and husband Brett along with their two children Austin and Jenna.; his in-laws, Louis Lodney and Mary Higginbotham and sisters-in-law, Patricia and Tereasa Higginbotham. He was preceded in death by his father, Harold Ernest “Woody” Woodrich and his grandparents, Ernest and Helen Woodrich and Toby and Ola Haynes. A memorial service took place April 8 at Judson Baptist Church in Walker.

ON THE MOVE

■ **Steven Hicks** is the new youth pastor at First Baptist Church, Luling.
■ **Buck Curry** is the new pastor of Waverly First Baptist Church, Delhi

HOMEcoming

■ Hebron Baptist Church, Denham Springs: **179th Hebron Homecoming 2016**, May 1, 10 a.m. There will be a potluck meal after the service. Speaker: Dennis Phelps. Music: Hebron Worship Ministry.

REVIVAL

■ Jamestown Baptist Church, Jamestown: **Revival**, April 24, Sunday, 11 a.m. and 6 p.m., Monday-Wednesday, 6:30 p.m. Evangelist: **Reubin Weaver**. Music: **David Daniels**. The church is located at 5852 Hwy 154, Jamestown. Pastor: Everett Geis, Jr.
■ Ethel Baptist Church, Ethel: **Revival**, April 24-27, Sunday, 10:45 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.; Monday-Wednesday, 6:30 p.m. Dinner on the grounds will follow Sunday's 10:45 a.m. service. Speaker: **Kirk Jones**. Music: **Chronicle on Sunday and Fellowship Baptist Church in Prairieville Monday-Wednesday**. Pastor: Ed Jelks.
■ Ebenezer Baptist Church, Jonesboro: **Revival**, May 1-4. Evangelist: **Bob Heustess**. Worship: **David Deal**. Senior adult lunch Sunday and meals will be served nightly. Pastor: Randy Lee.
■ Emmanuel Baptist Church, Mansfield: **Revival**, May 1-3, Sunday 10:45 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Monday-Tuesday, 6:30 p.m. Evangelist: **Tim Robinson**, pastor of North Hills Baptist Church in Whitesboro, Texas. Music: **Rocky Maddox (Monday night)**. Pastor: Eli ‘Skip’ Noble, Jr.

LAGNIAPPE

■ **Everette Vance Culpepper**, who has moved back to his native state of Louisiana from Oregon on the 60th anniversary of his ordination, is available for pulpit supply or to pastor. He may be contacted by email at evculpepper@gmail.com or by calling 318.395.3326 or 541.351.0054.
■ First Baptist Church, Haynesville: **Prophecy**

Conference with Al Gist, May 24. He will teaching during the Sunday school hour, 9:45 a.m.; preaching during morning service, 11 a.m. and he will teach two sessions in the evening beginning at 6 p.m. Speaker: **Al Gist, Maranatha Evangelistic Ministries**. Pastor: Shelby Cowling.

■ Jamestown Baptist Church, Jamestown: **Fish Fry followed by a concert with Brad Mount**, April 23, 6 p.m. The church is located at 5852 Hwy 154, Jamestown, LA. Pastor: Everett Geis, Jr.

■ First Baptist Church, West Monroe: **Priscilla Shier simulcast**, April 23, 7:50 a.m. Cost: free and no reservations necessary. For more information, contact Rhonda Moody, women's ministry associate at 318.322.5104.

■ Richey Baptist Church, Deville: **Classic Car Show**, April 23, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. New or classic models will be on display at the church. Entry fee: \$20. For more information, contact Grady Dodge at 318.447.9047 or Penny Harmson 318.715.5115 or email pharmson@suddenlink.net. Pastor: Grady Dodge.

■ First Baptist Church, Youngsville: **French Rally**, April 29; Fellowship supper is at 5:30 p.m. and the all French service starts at 6:30 p.m. Speaker: **Norris Landry**. For more information, call 337.856.5806. Pastor: Chris Fuselier.

■ First Baptist Church, Slidell: **‘Mini’ Sheepdog Seminar**, April 30, 8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. Speakers: **Police officer and pastor Jimmy Meeks, Carl Chinn**. Cost: \$20 per person, pre-registration is required. Pastors, youth directors, first responders, elders, deacons, church safety teams, ushers, and children's workers are urged to attend. Pastor: Ricky Cummings.

■ First Baptist Church, New Orleans: **Fight of Your Life Men's Conference**, April 30, 8 a.m. – noon. Participants will learn how to be men of purity, accountability and purpose. Speaker: **Greg Miller**. Cost: \$30. For more information, call 504.482.5775. Pastor: David Crosby.

■ Parkview Baptist Church, Sulphur: **Special service honoring Randall Chesson** for 40 years of service as pastor, May 1, 11 a.m.

■ Holden Baptist Church: **Lisa McCorkle Memorial Fundraiser Baseball Game**, May 1, at the Holden High School baseball field. Opening ceremony will be at 4 p.m. followed by a children's game and an adult game. For more information, please call 225.939.8173 or 225.806.5163. Pastor: Russell Hinson.

■ **Campers on Mission group annual work week at Judson Baptist Retreat Center** in Jackson, May 2-6. All skill levels are welcomed as there are a variety of projects from general cleaning to landscaping to construction and remodeling. Judson has accommodations so having an RV is not necessary. For reservations contact Judson at 225.634.7225 or email to retreat@bagbr.org. For more information, call COM President Keith Brown at 225.926.9410.

■ First Baptist Church, Pineville: **First@First Business Leader Luncheon**, May 2, Noon. Speaker: **Larry Cordaro, Louisiana State University at Alexandria men's basketball coach**. Cost: \$10 and you may pay at the door. Please RSVP to Melinda Langford (mlangford@fbcpineville.net). Pastor: Stewart Holloway.

■ First Baptist Church, Hornbeck: **‘National Day of Prayer’ Prayer Walk**, May 5, noon at Hornbeck Town Hall. Pastor: Jack Bell.

■ Philadelphia Baptist Church, Deville: **‘National Day of Prayer’ Community Service**, May 5, 6:30 p.m. Pastor: Philip Robertson.

Scripture Crypto

By **CHERYL VAUGHN**
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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.

qsp oqjo oqkv oszw vsx oqtk fqsxzw rk dsbmktf


cy oqk zjfo ocdk, pqs fqsxzw pjzm jaokt oqket spy

xylswzv zxfof.

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Clues:
P = W; X = U

Answer to April 7 Scripture Crypto:
Ezra four: fourteen



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Belarus from page 7

the son of a Belarussian pastor, hopes by 2020 a church will have started in 50 cities in the country that have no evangelical presence.

David Maxwell, pastor of Red Bluff Baptist Church in Folsom, has attended mission trips in 2012, 2013 and 2014, before the partnership officially was formed.

Calling the trips to Belarus the most rewarding ones of his life, he has seen hundreds saved during his time there.

He said he has shared the Gospel in schools, nursing homes, orphanages, a children's

eye hospital and in homes, Maxwell said, and that it is a joy to be a Louisiana Baptist and play a part in this effort.

"I would like to challenge my fellow pastors and sister churches in Louisiana to seek God's will concerning Belarus," Maxwell said. "Your prayers for the Byelorussian people and this cooperative effort are needed."

"We know everyone can't go but if you can go, come join us," he added. "If you can't go but can financially support with Bibles or Educational materials you will be a part of something

bigger than all of us. You will be a part of God's will being accomplished, as found in Matthew 28:19-20 ... "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you."

To contribute to the purchase of the Bibles, email Andrew@byelorussianmission.org. For more information on going on a mission trip there, email Wayne.Sheppard@louisianabaptists.org.

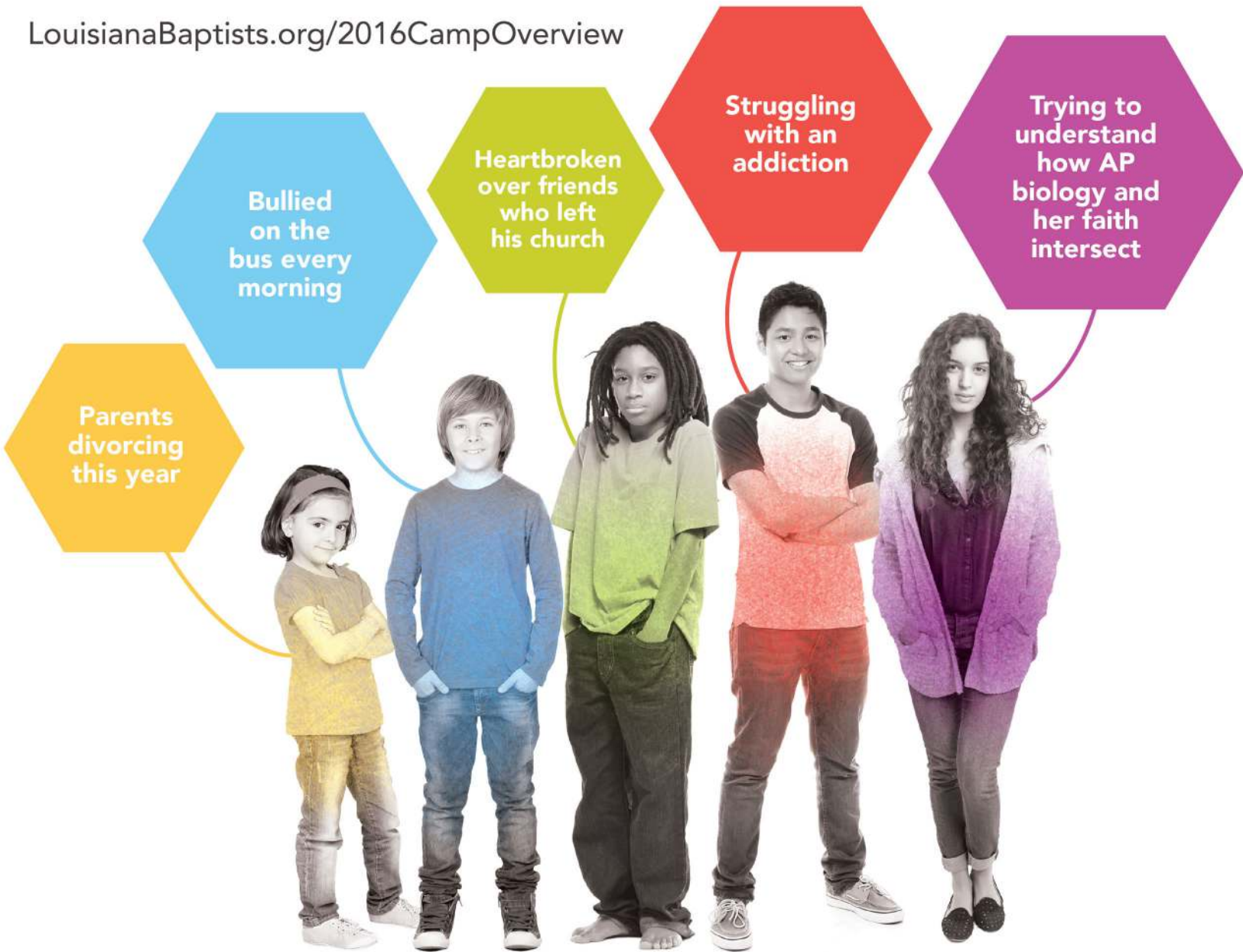
Trips to Belarus for 2016 are scheduled for May 4-13 and Sept. 7-16.



Submitted photo

Jeff Ingram, adult ministry strategist for Louisiana Baptists, enjoys a few moments with Pastor Viktor, his wife Oksana and children in front of their house church during a mission trip to Belarus in September 2015.

LouisianaBaptists.org/2016CampOverview



THIS IS WHY SUMMMER IS IMPORTANT

