

“Yea, the Lord
shall give that
which is good;
and our land
shall yield her
increase”

— Psalm 85:12

LOUISIANA BAPTIST Message

Newsjournal for Louisiana Baptists

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July 14, 2016

VBS fills baptisteries

BY BRIAN BLACKWELL
Message Staff Writer

BALL — The baptistery at Tioga First Baptist Church was a little crowded in late June but Pastor Tim Hisaw did not mind.

Four children who accepted Christ during the church's Vacation Bible School walked into the water and, as Hisaw baptized each child, thunderous applause broke out from those packed in the pews inside the worship center.

“It's nice to have a full baptistery isn't it, bud?” Hisaw told one of the children nearby. “If we get too many it will overflow and flood. It's a good thing the choir's not up here or they'd get wet.”

Before VBS, Hisaw prayed that four families would join Tioga First Baptist by the time it was over.

But God answered his prayers by drawing these four children, instead — confirmation God was at work during VBS, which averaged 85 in attendance each day.

Though the children took part in recreation and refreshments, Hisaw said the end goal

was sharing the Gospel.

“That's why we do Vacation Bible School,” Hisaw said. “We do this to make an eternal impact on them by introducing them to Jesus.”

Church member Misty Stewart said the excitement of accepting Christ during VBS has not waned for her son, Matthew, who was baptized with the three others. Now, Stewart



Submitted photo

Jacob Crawford, pastor of Life Point Community Church in Mansura, baptizes Trey Moras, who was baptized along with his mother, brother and grandmother.

said, her son shares with anyone he comes in contact with about the life-changing decision he made.

“His favorite thing to tell people right now is that he has two fathers,” she said. “I looked at him a little crazy the first time he said that and said, no, you only have one

and his response was God is my number one father and daddy is my second. I'm so thankful for Matthew's profession of faith and can't wait to see him grow in his walk with Christ.”

Tioga First Baptist reflects what other churches are reporting to the *Baptist Message* — higher than average baptisms resulting from VBS.

See VBS on 6



Submitted photo

Four eager young people fill the baptistery at Tioga First Baptist Church moments before they are baptized by Pastor Tim Hisaw. The church averaged 85 in attendance every day and Hisaw expresses gratitude for those children who did accept Christ as their personal Lord and Savior as a result of the church's VBS.



Photo courtesy of St. Tammany Fire District 1 photo

Fire District 1 firefighters battle an arson fire at Bayou Baptist Church on Sullivan Street in Slidell July 2. The building was a total loss, authorities said.

Bayou Baptist burns again, undaunted despite a possible second attack

BY STAFF
Baptist Message

SLIDELL — The pastor and the congregation of Bayou Baptist Church are resolute but still shocked after their church was torched by an arsonist for the second time in 10 months.

“We don't know who would want to do this to us,” Pastor Frank Treme shared with the *Baptist Message*, adding, “We have never had

See Bayou Baptist on 8

Cajundome 'will be ready' for 2016 YEC

BY STAFF
Baptist Message

LAFAYETTE – State officials have reassured Louisiana Baptists that the Cajundome will be ready for the 2016 Youth Evangelism Conference scheduled for the Lafayette facility, Nov. 20-21.

A June 30 report in *The Advocate* created confusion among the public by stating the arena “won’t re-open for business until Dec. 1.” But apparently, the information was not correct in context of the YEC.

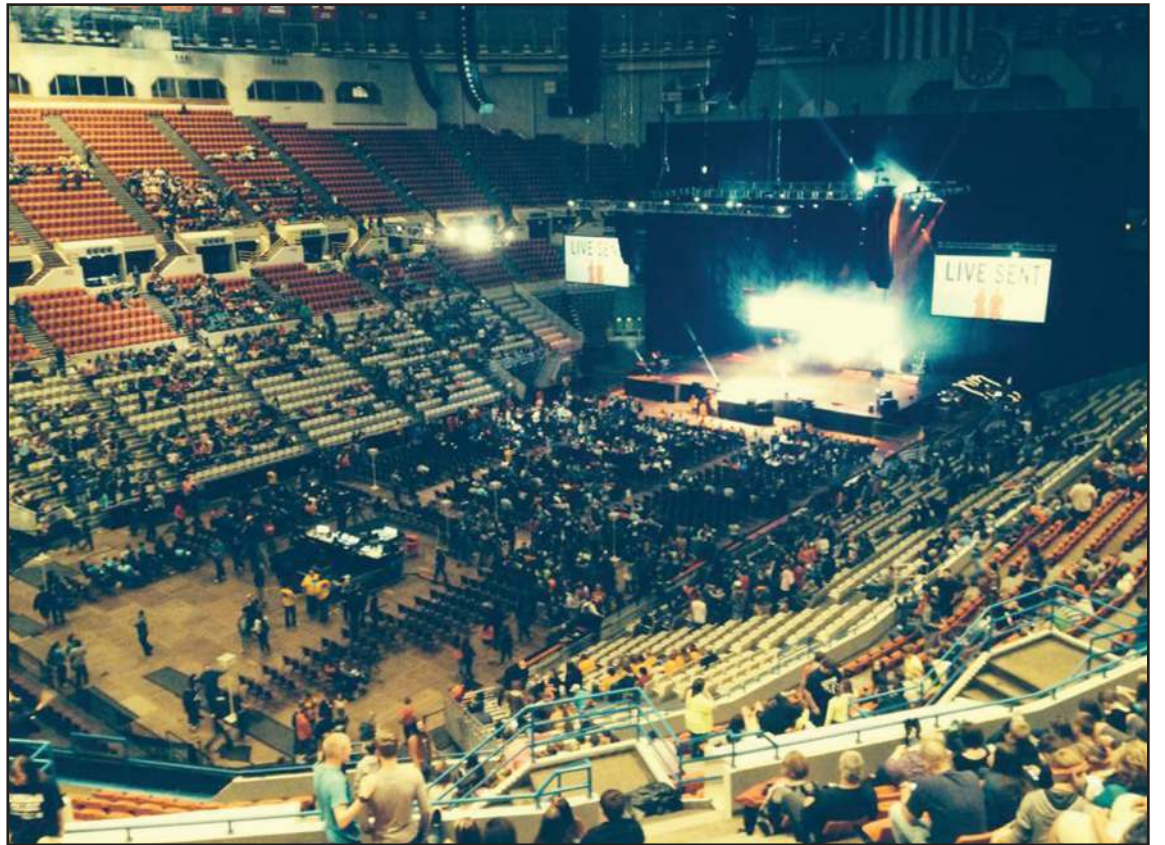
“We have been given assurances the Cajundome will be ready prior to our event,” Louisiana Baptist Convention youth strategist Steve Maltempi said in a statement to

the *Baptist Message*.

Maltempi shared information with the *Baptist Message* which cleared up the misunderstanding caused by *The Advocate* article.

“The reason you see Dec. 1st in media reports is we don’t expect or plan to schedule basketball and hockey games or any major concerts until Dec. 1st, or about 9 days after your event ends,” wrote one Cajundome official to Maltempi. “We have always expected and needed those 9 days to prepare the hockey rink and basketball court on top of the hockey rink in the new arena configuration for the upcoming season after your event.”

See YEC on 11



Brian Blackwell photo

Around 5,900 filled the Cajundome in Lafayette for the 2015 Youth Evangelism Celebration. The arena is undergoing renovations but officials with the Cajundome have reassured Louisiana Baptists that the facility will be ready for this year’s YEC, scheduled for Nov. 20-21.



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Resolutions, nominees for Louisiana posts being sought

ALEXANDRIA – Louisiana Baptists are invited to submit names of nominees for service on state convention boards and committees and to submit resolutions for possible consideration for the 2016 Louisiana Baptist Convention.

The Louisiana Baptist Committee on Committees is beginning its work to nominate persons to serve on various state convention committees.

Currently, 17 nominees are needed for service on committees on Credentials, Moral and Social Concerns, Nominations, Order of Business and Resolutions. Committee on Committees Chair is Jake Roudkovski, Bogue Falaya, Folsom.

In addition, the Louisiana Baptist Committee on Nominations is beginning its work to fill vacancies on state boards.

At this point, 17 nominees are needed to serve on the Convention's Executive

Board and as trustees of Louisiana College, the Louisiana Baptist Children's Home and Family Ministries, the *Baptist Message*, and the Baptist Foundation. The Committee on Nominations chair is Philip Robertson, Philadelphia, Deville.

As in previous years, persons should submit names of nominees and the committee or board for which they are being nominated. Submissions should include information on the nominee's church membership and current employment. Nominations should be submitted no later than August 17.

Nominees for committees should be sent to Jake Roudkovski, 14278 Highway 1077, Folsom, LA 70437 or jaker@nobts.edu. Nominees for boards should be sent to Philip Robertson, 317 Philadelphia Road, Pineville, LA 71360 or pastor@pbministry.com.

Also, persons interested

in submitting resolutions for this fall's state convention are asked to submit their statements by August 22. The first meeting of the Resolutions Committee is Sept. 20.

Resolutions must be submitted to the Committee for review and consideration no more than ninety (90) days, but no later than fifteen (15) days, prior to the LBC annual meeting.

Early submissions allow the LBC Resolutions Committee to begin its work to determine which resolutions to present to the Conven-

tion. Resolutions should be typewritten, titled and dated. They should be accompanied by a letter from a church qualified to send a messenger to the annual meeting of the Louisiana Baptist Convention certifying that the person submitting the resolution is a member in good standing and should include complete contact information for both the person submitting it, and his or her church. No person may submit more than three resolutions per year.

The Resolutions Committee chair is Jeff Meyers,

Greenwell Springs, Denham Springs. Persons should mail proposed resolutions to the Resolutions Committee through the LBC Office of Public Affairs.

They may be mailed to P. O. Box 311, Alexandria, LA 71309, faxed to (318)449-4287, or e-mailed to OPA@LouisianaBaptists.org.

If you need assistance with the wording of a resolution, you may also contact by phone or email LBC Public Affairs Officer Will Hall at 318.448.3402 or email him at OPA@LouisianaBaptists.org.

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28 – North Monroe BC Senior Adults
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JULY

10 – Calvary Baptist Church, Alexandria
23 – 1-Day Mission Trip at The Hub, Shreveport
Calvary BC, Alexandria
29 – Annual Prayer Breakfast
LA. Municipal Association
Alexandria Riverfront Center
30 & 31 – FBC Covington

AUGUST

4 – FBC Jena, Senior Adult "Happy Hearts"
13 – North Monroe BC
Jennifer Robertson Memorial Praisefest
28 – Judson BC, Walker

SEPTEMBER

7 – Istrouma BC, Baton Rouge
11 – New Prospect BC, Dry Prong
18 – FBC, Jennings
19, 20 & 21 – Monroe, NEBLA Senior Adults
21 – FBC Lafayette, Inside Out
25 – FBC Rayville

OCTOBER

1 – FBC West Monroe
Great Commissioning Seminar
5 – Calvary BC Alexandria, Inside Out
9 – Plainview BC, Bogalusa
100 year Celebration
9 – Pasadena, Texas
10 – Pasadena, Texas, Chapel
10 – Pine Grove BC, Livingston
Annual ELBA Associational Meeting
16 – FBC Houma
Bayou Associational Ministry Celebration
19 – John Curtis Christian, Inside Out

NOVEMBER

9 – FBC West Monroe, Inside Out
16 – FBC, DeRidder, Inside Out
20 – FBC, Ville Platte

2017

JANUARY

9, 10 & 11 – Philadelphia BC
January Bible Study
19 – FBC West Monroe
Sr. Adult Golden Years Event



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ERLC & IMB support mosque in principle, not financially

By WILL HALL
Message Editor

ALEXANDRIA – A controversy has erupted about two Southern Baptist Convention entities – the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission and the International Mission Board – that signed a friend of the court brief indicating support for the right of a Muslim group to construct a mosque in New Jersey, raising questions about misuse of Cooperative Program dollars and concerns about proper prioritizing in representing the interests of Southern Baptists by these national ministries.

Both SBC entities have said it was important for them to participate to show support for the religious liberty of all people, including Muslims. Additionally, the IMB issued a brief statement clarifying that it has not contributed money or personnel to build the mosque.

BACKGROUND

The court case involves a lawsuit by the Islamic Society of Basking Ridge against the Township of Bernards, a community with a population of about 27,000 located about 36 miles outside of New York City. According to a legal brief filed on behalf of the Muslim group, the ISBR has sought permission since September 2012 to build a mosque in Basking Ridge, a community

within the municipality of Bernards.

During December 2015, the city voted down the ISBR application to build on a 4-acre plot it had purchased in what is described in a local news report as a “historic section” of the township. The city planning board cited problems with the building plans, including: a lack of a “satisfactory buffer” with residential neighborhoods which abut the property on three sides; “width of parking spaces” and a poor layout of driving lanes; “a non-compliant storm water plan”; and, “insufficient access for fire and emergency vehicles.”

Patch.com also noted the displeasure of at least one planning committee member that despite “three and a half years of discussions” the Muslim group “had an opportunity to meet the guidelines, yet they failed to comply.”

The lawsuit, however, accuses the township of “unequal treatment” of Muslims.

Specifically, the amicus brief alleges “vagueness” in the city planning codes, and, complains the planning board has “unbridled discretion” and is subjecting Muslims “to a different legal standard than every other house of worship in the community.”

CONTROVERSY

At least one Baptist leader in New Jersey disagrees with

the lawsuit signed onto by the ERLC and the IMB.

A former president of the Baptist Convention of New York, whose fellowship of churches includes congregations in this part of New Jersey, told Baptist Press that a Baptist church in the same township attempted a similar process “a few years back,” only to be voted down by the planning board.

“The church spent hundreds of thousands of dollars only to be told that their site plan did not, and probably would never, meet all the requirements. Local residents raised even more money to defeat them,” he said by email, asking not to be identified by name. He added that Bernards residents were generally opposed to “any new religious facility being built in their backyards” and that in the end, unlike the Muslim group, the Baptist church opted against a lawsuit.

He said although the planning board’s decisions related to new church construction did not always sit well with him, “at least they are consistent.”

A prominent Baptist state paper editor took issue with the ERLC on the matter, questioning whether Southern Baptists should be part of such legal action even if in the defense of religious liberty for all, because Islam is “a movement that aggressively militates against other religions.”

Gerald Harris, writing in the Internet edition of The Christian Index, criticized the move to “unite with other entities like the Center for Islam and Religious Freedom, Interfaith Coalition on Mosques, In-

ternational Society for Krishna Consciousness, Muslim Bar Association of New York, New Jersey Muslim Lawyers Association, Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund, Sikh Coalition, and Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of New Jersey.”

Harris also accused the ERLC of defending the “religious liberty of Muslims in New Jersey” but failing to help Georgia Baptists in their “quest to pass religious liberty legislation earlier this year.” Georgia Baptists had backed a pastor protection act that would have prevented the state from forcing pastors to perform same-sex wedding ceremonies – a bill passed by the legislature but vetoed by the governor.

Meanwhile, two pastors attending the recent SBC annual meeting, which was held in St. Louis, Missouri, offered motions critical of the mosque amicus brief. One asked for SBC leaders who signed the document to be removed from office, and the other asked the SBC to withdraw the friend of the court brief. Both were ruled out of order because they exceeded the authority of the messengers at the Convention.

RESPONSE

The International Mission Board issued a brief statement June 11 on its website clarifying that it “supports freedom of religion for all people both in the United States and around the world.”

“IMB signing the amicus brief regarding the New Jersey mosque is an agreement that all people deserve religious lib-

erty, but it does not in any way support the mosque financially or with human resources.”

This short comment was posted among other responses to issues addressed on the “IMB Frequently Asked Questions” page.

Meanwhile, Russell Moore, president of the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, defended his position at the 2016 SBC Annual Meeting after being challenged about his support for building the mosque.

Pastor John Wofford of Armored Baptist Church in Arkansas asked Moore whether Jesus would have supported “the rights of Baal worshipers to erect temples to Baal?”

Moore responded “soul freedom for everybody” is a Baptist distinctive and argued that a government which decides “whether or not a house of worship can be constructed based upon the theological beliefs of that house of worship” would mean “Southern Baptist churches in San Francisco and New York and throughout this country who are not going to be able to build.”

“A government that has the power to outlaw people from assembling together and saying what they believe – that does not turn people into Christians, that turns people into pretend Christians and it sends them straight to Hell,” Moore said.


Wofford was not afforded the opportunity to respond to Moore because officials turned off his microphone. But he subsequently wrote a letter published in The Arkansas Baptist News saying for him the issue is not a civil government matter as Moore contends, but a spiritual one.

Specifically, he said the primary reference for Christians should not be the First Amendment but the First and Second Commandments of God, and, he differed with Moore’s interpretation of the eternal consequences of the issue.

“As a preacher of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, I desire to see men ‘turn from their idols and serve the living and true God,’ he wrote. ‘Why then would I waste my efforts or money in helping them to erect places of false worship which keeps them under condemnation and invalidates my witness of the One True God?’

“I guess you could say that I am in business to save the souls of men, I am not in business of helping them go to Hell.”

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Summertime is good for Louisiana Baptist missions

ALEXANDRIA – I hope this summer season allows you an opportunity to relax, vacation with your family, and otherwise enjoy some time off. But don't forget the amazing ministries that are taking place this summer.

I have been hearing reports of outstanding participation in VBS from churches all over our state with scores and scores of children giving their lives to Christ.

Our GOLA VBS teams, sponsored by the Baptist Collegiate Ministry, are working throughout Louisiana and all the way to Canada.

Additional summer mis-

sionaries from Louisiana are fanned out all over the globe.

Numerous other Louisiana Baptists, including LBC strategists, are involved in mission trips this summer from Brazil to Belarus to Indonesia.

Another summer outreach staple is our camping ministries. Tall Timbers, our LBC state camp, is experiencing another record year in children and youth attendance with

most weeks full to overflowing. We are so thankful for the new Georgia Barnette Missions Conference Center which is nearing completion and which will provide needed room to grow.

Even the summer session of the Louisiana legislature afforded opportunities for LBC ministries.

Louisiana Baptists' Office of Public Policy played a key role in passing critical legislation that benefits our churches in practical ways to support our cooperative missions and ministries.

Dr. Will Hall, our director, met privately with legislators, developed policy papers, testified in committees and lobbied on the House and Senate floors to help push through such measures as the repeal of the taxes imposed on churches during the 2016 First Extraordinary Session.

Our churches can be thankful that we are so ably represented in Baton Rouge.

Dr. Hall already had success in supporting multiple bills to protect the life of the unborn. His son Jacob, who has Down syndrome, even testified before two committees in support of legislation to prevent the abortion of a child just for being diagnosed with an abnormality like Down syndrome. Both the House and Senate overwhelmingly passed that bill.

Even in the hazy, lazy days

of summer Louisiana Baptist missions are in full swing. So, enjoy your summer. Be at church when you are in town. Send your tithe in when you are away. Don't forget to pray for all the mission work being done in the good old summertime.

Dr. David Hankins is the Executive Director of the Louisiana Baptist Convention.



DAVID HANKINS
Executive Director
Louisiana Baptist
Convention

Legislators repeal sales taxes imposed on churches in March

By WILL HALL

Message Editor

BATON ROUGE – Gov. John Bel Edwards signed House Bill 51 into law June 28 as Act 12 of the 2016 Second Extraordinary Session for the Louisiana Legislature, removing a number of taxes on church activities that were imposed in March as part of Acts 25 and 26 of the 2016 First Extraordinary Session.

Although Act 12 took effect July 1, the Louisiana Department of Revenue has yet to issue an official interpretation.

However, legislators have said publicly this measure should fix the difficulties created for churches by the earlier action.

When the LDR releases its guidance, churches should anticipate relief from collecting taxes on such things as cake sales and auctions, which were tagged with special tax rates from April 1, 2016 – June 30, 2018.

HB 51 was offered by Rep. Jim Morris of whose District 1 office is in Oil City, but a number of legislators signed onto the bill as co-sponsors, including 58 representatives

and two senators.

Rep. Rick Edmonds (District 66, Baton Rouge), a

See **SALES TAXES** on 7

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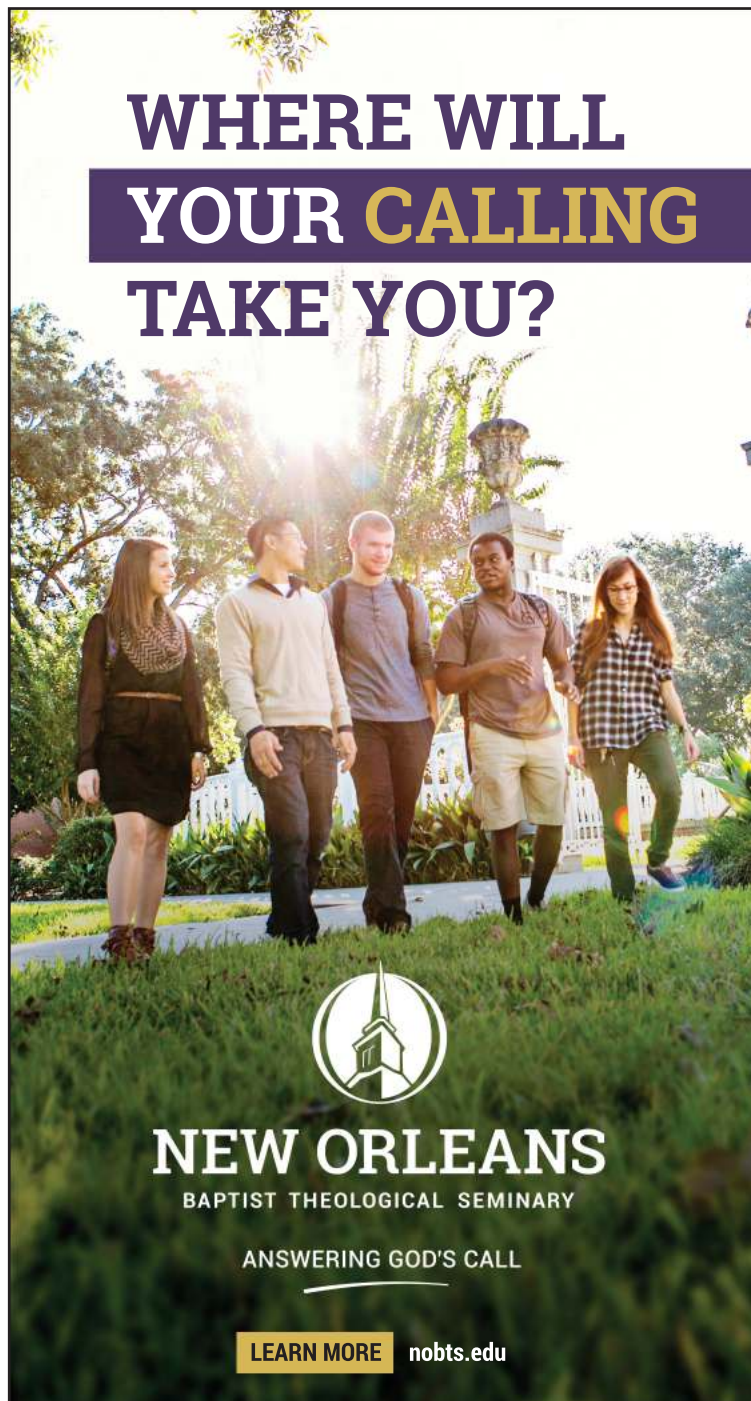
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6 Louisiana Churches

VBS from page one

ACROSS LOUISIANA

At Life Point Community Church in Mansura, 23 children and their parents accepted Christ during VBS. Of those, 15 already have been baptized, including three from the Plaquemine campus.

The highest attendance on any single day was 142.

Pastor Jacob Crawford attributes those results to a recent event God used to spiritually grow his congregation.

Earlier in the month the youth participated in a mission trip to Grand Isle, he said, when a traumatic experience left an eternal impression on them – they were swimming and witnessed a man trying to save his son from a rip tide die.

Crawford said God used that as a catalyst to open their eyes to the fact that death is real, causing many of the youth

to accept Christ as their personal Lord and Savior.

A week later, most of those young people used their newfound faith to share Christ with the children attending VBS at Life Point Community Church.

“We’d gone several months without baptizing anyone and have been under intense spiritual warfare,” Crawford said. “We continued to persevere and reach out. Then, all the sudden it was as if there was a major breakthrough.”

“I see movement of God due to the fact that for months it has felt like a spiritual drought and then suddenly people’s hearts are being touched by the spirit of God. Lives are being changed and people are publicly professing their faith in Christ.”

For its part, New Hope Baptist Church in Calcasieu baptized three children who

attended VBS and even saw one of its volunteers commit to full-time ministry after the event concluded.

Pastor Robert McLane said in the past they have introduced the children to the Gospel through VBS but few were baptized. This year, McLane said the seeds that were planted finally saw a harvest of baptisms, in turn igniting excitement into his congregation. He baptized the children during a special service on the Sunday following the final session of VBS.

“When these children got saved, it lit a fire in all the workers,” McLane said. “VBS is hard work and our volunteers gave 100 percent to everything they did. The baptisms were icing on the cake.”

“We’re small but this is big to us,” he said. “VBS is one tool that works. It’s our bread and butter for evangelism.”

Sara Howard, a sophomore at Nicholls State University and a VBS volunteer, called the week life changing.

She helped lead music during the group assemblies and sensed the Holy Spirit moving. Not long after VBS concluded, Howard felt God leading her to accept the call to Christian vocational ministry on a full-time basis.

“The Lord has been working in my heart since last September,” she said. “It all comes down to the fact I have been trying to fit God into what I wanted to do instead of embracing His plans for me. Finally I surrendered and gave up the fight. Now, I’m on this

adventure.”

Further north, Airline Baptist Church in Bossier City had set a goal that 10 percent of those attending its VBS would accept Christ. Throughout their outreach, they targeted mostly unchurched children and families in the community and in the end, 64 who came indicated they did not have a church home.

By the time VBS concluded, the church accomplished its goal.

Nearly 20 of the 200 children who attended made a profession of faith, including six who were baptized on the Sunday following VBS.

Instead of holding a traditional family night, the church staff chose instead to invite all the families whose children attended VBS for a special Sunday morning service that included songs during the week, a baptismal service and meal.

“We feel there are a lot of churches, but still there are a lot of people in Bossier who aren’t church,” said children’s minister Lynn Puryear. “We wanted to give them an opportunity to come to our church and see what it is all about, including our special Sunday service. By having a baptism celebration, it gave me and others on staff an opportunity to call people and have great conversations, with the goal of connecting them to our church and Jesus.”

First Baptist Church in Port Barre hopes in the near future to baptize many of the 45 who made a decision in what was

their largest VBS in 90 years, with 260 in attendance. Pastor Benji Richard said the VBS teachers and other youth leaders in the church will follow up with the parents of the children who made decisions before determining dates to baptize.

“One of the most important things we did was not prepare physically but prepare spiritually,” Richard said. “We were praying up and began preparing months ahead of time that we would see a move of God and revival through our Vacation Bible School.”

FOLLOW UP

In the coming days and months ahead, all of the churches plan to enlist the children who were baptized into discipleship training.

Hisaw said his congregation will use the curriculum “I’m A Christian Now.” He said Christians are called not to just make converts but to make disciples.

“When we baptize we fulfill part of the Great Commission,” Hisaw said. “But if we stop there, we don’t fulfill all of it.”

In coming weeks, McLane will meet with each child he baptized, and will work to get each to participate in the church’s Bible skills, drills and thrills program that meets Wednesday evenings.

“To me it would be a tragedy to just baptize them and do nothing else,” McLane said.

“A lot of them we might not see again if we didn’t do anything after baptism. We are going to make a big effort in that direction and we want them to keep coming and growing and discover God’s will in their lives,” he said. “That Sunday we baptized them was an exciting day, but that was just the first day of work.”

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Louisiana Baptists take lead on key pro-life legislation

BY WILL HALL

Message Editor

BATON ROUGE — While Louisiana's budget debate dominated headlines across the state during the three legislative sessions in 2016, Louisiana Baptists in the House and Senate gave critical leadership in passing a number of important measures, especially those with a pro-life emphasis.

-- Rep. Mike Johnson (R-Dist. 8), a member of FBC Bossier City, authored HB 1081 (Act 264), the Louisiana Unborn Child Protection from Dismemberment Act which

ends the brutal practice by abortionists of tearing body parts from a live, unborn child typically as part of late-term procedures.

-- Rep. Rick Edmonds (R-Dist. 66), retired pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Shreveport and former vice president of Louisiana Family Forum, advanced "Jacob's Law," or HB 1019 (Act 563), which protects unborn children from being singled out for abortion simply for being diagnosed with a disability such as Down syndrome.

-- Sen. Ryan Gatti (R-Dist. 36), also a member of FBC Bossier City, was the origina-

tor of SB 33 (Act 196). This measure prohibits the sale or donation of human limbs and organs harvested as a result of an elective abortion, thus banning groups like Planned Parenthood from profiting from baby body parts.

-- Rep. Frank Hoffmann (R-Dist. 15), a member of First West Monroe, wrote two key pro-life bills, HB 386 (Act 97) and HB 606 (Act 304). The first increased the time for reflection between pre-abortion counseling and the actual abortion procedure from 24 hours to 72 hours — relieving some of the immediacy of the crisis and allowing women the chance for further reflection on all the options. The other measure ensures state funds used for women's health go to clinics that provide essential services but do not perform abortions.

Hoffmann also sponsored a resolution that requests the Louisiana Department of Health to study the effectiveness of a new drug that reverses chemical abortions that

have not gone to stage two, which involves consumption of a second abortifacient drug usually two days after taking the first.

Eight other pro-life or life affirming measures were passed as well: requiring board certification for abortion providers; providing burial or cremation options to parents who lost a child to

miscarriage; mandating burial or cremation for aborted children; giving training and other support to expectant and parenting students; strengthening safe haven provisions; creating a foster care permanence task force; extending the youth aging out of foster care task force; and, providing financial aid and housing for homeless and foster youth.

Sales Tax from page 5

retired Louisiana Baptist pastor (Calvary Baptist Church in Shreveport) and former vice president with Louisiana Family Forum, was particularly aggressive in working this issue. He offered eight bills which were rolled into the final legislation reversing the taxes.

Church leaders should

monitor BaptistMessage.com and LouisianaBaptists.org for updates. Meanwhile, Act 12 can be read at legis.la.gov by using the "Bills" dropdown menu, clicking on "2016 Second Extraordinary Session" and choosing "Bill Numbers to Acts" in the left margin of the subsequent page.

Tompkins, Keough receive doctorates from Midwestern Baptist Theological

KANSAS CITY, Missouri — Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary awarded degrees to 120 students at its 59th commencement exercises at the Daniel Lee Chapel.

In all, 120 students graduated including one diploma from the Midwestern Women's Institute, one diploma in Christian Ministry, 25 undergraduate, 80 graduate, and 14 doctoral degrees being conferred.


Among those receiving

doctorates from Louisiana were: Randy Tompkins, Owner of Cornerstone Consultants Ministry and trustee at MBTS and Peter Eric Keough. Tompkins received a Doctor of Educational Ministry and Keough earned a Doctor of Ministry in Leadership.

President Jason Allen's charge to students in his commencement address to, "Finish Well," as well as a presentation of the institution's Professor of the Year award.

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Bayou Baptist from page one

any prior incidents where someone accused us of ill will that I am aware of.

"We are a church for all races and people," he said. "This church is a safe haven for all people and we would like for all people to feel safe coming into God's house to worship and pray.

"It is hard for everyone in our church," Treme continued. "We have had to overcome so much. First, we had to rebuild after the flooding

from Hurricane Katrina, then the fire in October, and now this."

Treme said his congregation of 50 or so came together to face these other challenges, and he is confident they will rise to the occasion this time, too.

In the early morning of July 2, a neighbor called 911 to report flames engulfing the church according to a release by the Slidell Police Department.

Firefighters arrived in just over two minutes after the 7:30 a.m. call and found flames leaping from the front and rear of the 2,500 square foot building and heavy smoke enveloping the structure. The fire department was able to extinguish the fire in about 15 minutes without any injuries to the response team.

The fire department is reporting the building as "a total loss."

"We're not giving up because someone wants to do us harm," Treme said. "If you do that, they win and we lose. Several people from the neighborhood have dropped by and said it's such a loss. It's a comfort knowing we touch so many lives in this area."

The church, which was vacant and did not have electricity according to the release, was in the process of being renovated from the October 2015 blaze.

Treme said the fire occurred in a section of the church property that did not affect ongoing renovations to one of the other buildings on the campus.

Director of Missions



Photo courtesy of St. Tammany Fire District No. 1

Bayou Baptist Church in Slidell was fully engulfed in flames and smoke when firefighters arrived (just two minutes after being called). They quickly put out the fire but said the church is a "total loss." It was the second fire at Bayou Baptist in eight months. Arson is suspected once again by fire investigators.

Lonnie Wascom said to his knowledge this is the first time a church in the Northshore Baptist Association, which includes Bayou Baptist, has been victimized by an arsonist – not once but twice.

"We all are in a state of shock," said Wascom. "Right now the best way to help is to pray."

Treme echoes the thought. "Pray for God's guid-

ance," he said. "And pray this person will be caught so he or she won't be destroying anymore lives. We won't be stopped in our mission to minister to all in Christ's name."

According to Fire Prevention Officer Chad Duffaut for Fire District 1, the arsonist set the first fire in October to cover up a burglary. The resulting blaze caused extensive damage.

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**Louisiana
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Pastor finishes strong, baptizing till the very end

BY BRIAN BLACKWELL
Message Staff Writer

DRY PRONG – Lloyd

Whitman was nearing his final weeks of a 30-year ministry at First Baptist Church Dry Prong, but refused to “coast along” until he retired.

Instead, Whitman wanted to baptize at least one person during his final two months at the central Louisiana church.

He did that and more, baptizing at least one person each week from the the first Sunday in January until he stepped out of the pulpit Feb. 28.

Whitman said not doing so would have gone against the very mission of Jesus Christ that he has tried to fulfill in his 51 years of ministry.

“To see what God was doing at the end of my ministry was rewarding to me,” Whit-

man said. “The mission of the church is to win people to Jesus. To see that being fulfilled at Dry Prong gave me a sense

church experienced its own personal revival.

“God was just moving in every area of our church,”

he continued.

“I believe the key to this was that we began to pray and we began to search our own hearts to seek God’s face for a new pastor. I told our people to search your own life and pray if this is the man to lead us the next years.”

When Whitman came to First Baptist Dry Prong in October 1985, the congregation was averaging 90 in Sunday School and 125 in Sunday

morning worship.

of thankfulness and gratitude to God that He was moving in a powerful way.”

The string of baptisms came on the heels of the end of an 18-month search for a new pastor at First Baptist Dry Prong. Whitman said the congregation had prayed during that time that God would lead them to the right man for the job. In the process, the

Today, those numbers have grown to 200 and 300, respectively, with Whitman baptizing 400 new Believers during the same timeframe.

For the first three years

he was pastor at First Baptist Dry Prong and 17 years prior to that, Whitman was teaching and coaching at the parish school district. He

See WHITMAN on 12



Brian Blackwell photo

Since 1985, Lloyd Whitman was a mainstay at First Baptist Church in Dry Prong. When he retired earlier this year as pastor, he chose to finish strong, baptizing one person each week from January with his final Sunday Feb. 28.

Pritchard Baptist Church in Jena, LA

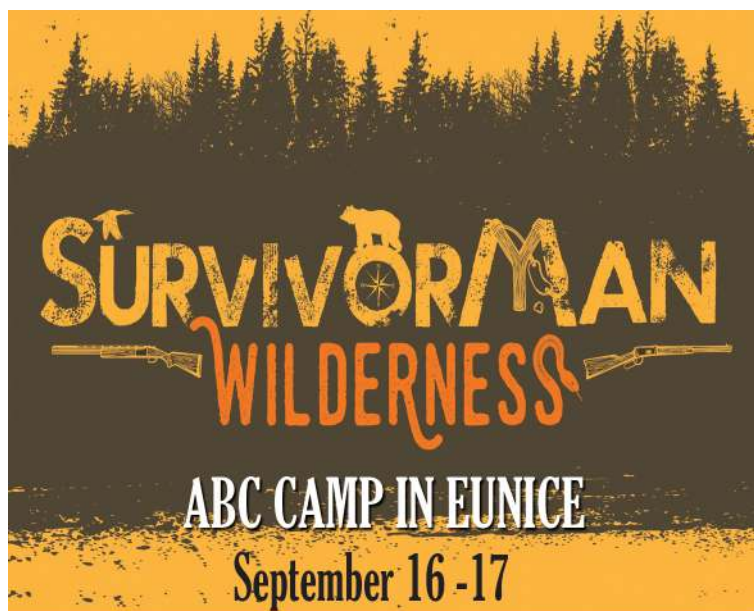
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Brian Blackwell photo

Thousands of youth will gather for YEC Nov. 20-21 at the Cajundome in Lafayette. This year's theme in "Stories," based on 1 John 1:2-3.

YEC from page 2

This official noted that crews will continue the work, which began May 23, up until Nov. 18 and then complete the final details for basketball and hockey competition Nov. 22-30.

But he said all the facilities needed for the YEC will be completed and fully functioning and "ready for use."

"Being ready for your event takes much less setup and specific configuration details than basketball, hockey or a reserved seat concert," he wrote.

The 2016 YEC theme is "Stories," based on 1 John 1:2-3. Ed Newton, pastor of Community Bible Church in San Antonio, Texas, is the main speaker.

To register and for more information about this largest annual gathering of Louisiana Baptists, visit yeclouisiana.org, or call 318.448.3402.

LOUISIANA NOTABLES

ON THE MOVE

- **James Doughty** is the new pastor at First Baptist Church, Monroe.
- **Jason Thomas** is the new Baptist Collegiate Ministries Director at Southern University, Baton Rouge.
- **Brian (wife Jana) Watson** is the new music minister at Eastwood Baptist Church, Haughton.
- **Ken (wife Barbara) Norris** is the new pastor at Bethsaida Baptist Church, Shreveport.
- **J.D. (wife Bethany) Jones** is the new youth minister at Trinity Heights Baptist Church, Shreveport.
- **Peter Tidovsky** resigned as music director at Waller Baptist Church, Bossier City.

IN REMEMBRANCE

- **Mark Eakin, 58**, passed away May 24. Services were held at Trinity Heights Baptist Church with Pastor Bill Saxby (Mark's friend and pastor) of Trinity Baptist Church, Texarkana, Arkansas, officiating. Interment was at Mt. Gilead Cemetery in Vivian, Louisiana. A graduate of Oklahoma State University spent his adult life in Christian ministry, pastoring churches in Oklahoma and Louisiana. The last sixteen years were devoted to hospice ministry. In 2005, he helped to found Dierksen Memorial Hospice in Texarkana, Texas. He joined the staff of Trinity Baptist Church, Texarkana, as Pastoral Care and worked simultaneously in hospice and church ministry until his death. He is preceded in death by his oldest son James Mark "Marcus" Eakin, Jr., of Bossier City, LA, his parents W. C. and Shawnee Eakin of Shreveport, and his sister Vickie Eakin Rone of Shreveport. He is survived by his wife of nearly 41 years Milda Marie Eakin, son Michael Eakin of Vivian, grandson Jaxon Mark Eakin of Haughton, sister Patti Wise and husband Johnnie of Shreveport, brother Steve Eakin and wife Diane of Shreveport, brother Bill Eakin and wife Laurie of Tulsa, OK, and brother Tom Eakin and wife Sherri of Euless, TX, and a host of nieces and nephews.
- **John Noah Langley, 82**, passed away at his residence in Kaplan June 25 after a four-year long battle with Alzheimer's and a recent blood disorder. Funeral services were held June 30 at Kaplan Baptist Church and he was laid to rest in the Memorial Mausoleum at St. Paul's Cemetery in Abbeville. A 1954 graduate from Basile High School, he was licensed by the First Baptist Church Basile there in 1956 and was ordained as a Baptist minister in 1957. He attended SLI in Lafayette and graduated from Nichols State University in May of 1964. Langley served as pastor of Gray Baptist Mission, Gibson Baptist Church, Ridgecrest Baptist Church, Ferriday, First Baptist Church in Breaux Bridge, Kaplan Baptist Church, Trinity Baptist Church in New Iberia, and as the associate pastor of First Baptist Church in Abbeville. He also served as clerk and treasurer of the Evangeline Baptist Association in Lafayette for many years. He retired as a full time pastor in 2001, but he continued to conduct weddings, funerals and ministered to the sick and shut-ins. He was also a Chaplain for Hospice of Acadiana and in 2006 he was recognized for his outstanding service by being presented the Dr. Jerome Romagosa award in memory of the founding director. Langley is survived by his daughter, Christie Hargrave and her husband David Hargrave of Kaplan; two grandchildren Taylor Hargrave and his wife, Lauren of Lafayette and Kasey Hargrave of Lake Charles; his twin brother, Rev. John Dore Langley and his wife, Eleanor of Iowa; his sister-in-law, Bonnie Langley of Jennings and numerous nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his wife of 42 years, Katherine Ernestine Chandler Langley, his parents Columbus Langley and Marceline Ledoux Langley, his step-mother, Nora Dukes Langley, two brothers, Harold and L.B. Langley, and one sister, Nora Langley.

tist Mission, Gibson Baptist Church, Ridgecrest Baptist Church, Ferriday, First Baptist Church in Breaux Bridge, Kaplan Baptist Church, Trinity Baptist Church in New Iberia, and as the associate pastor of First Baptist Church in Abbeville. He also served as clerk and treasurer of the Evangeline Baptist Association in Lafayette for many years. He retired as a full time pastor in 2001, but he continued to conduct weddings, funerals and ministered to the sick and shut-ins. He was also a Chaplain for Hospice of Acadiana and in 2006 he was recognized for his outstanding service by being presented the Dr. Jerome Romagosa award in memory of the founding director. Langley is survived by his daughter, Christie Hargrave and her husband David Hargrave of Kaplan; two grandchildren Taylor Hargrave and his wife, Lauren of Lafayette and Kasey Hargrave of Lake Charles; his twin brother, Rev. John Dore Langley and his wife, Eleanor of Iowa; his sister-in-law, Bonnie Langley of Jennings and numerous nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his wife of 42 years, Katherine Ernestine Chandler Langley, his parents Columbus Langley and Marceline Ledoux Langley, his step-mother, Nora Dukes Langley, two brothers, Harold and L.B. Langley, and one sister, Nora Langley.

HOMEcoming

- Hillcrest Baptist Church, Franklinton: **Church Anniversary**, July 17, 10:30 a.m. A pot-luck meal will follow the morning service in the Christian Life Center. Pastor: Andrew Voss.
- Lakeshore Baptist Church, Monroe: **62nd Anniversary**, July 24, 10:45 a.m. Pastor: William Smith.
- Beech Spring Baptist Church, Quitman: **109th Homecoming**, July 24, 11 a.m. Dinner on the grounds following the service. Special Music: Glorifying Him. Pastor: Jay Lancaster.

REVIVAL

- First Baptist Church, Minden: **Revive** (summer revival series), July 17, 24 & 31. July 17, 6 p.m. Speaker: John Lary. Music: Jake & Rachel Chapman. Fellowship following service features ice cream. July 24, 6 p.m. Speaker: Eddie Briery. Music: Joe & Jody Nida. Fellowship following service features hot dogs and soft drinks. July 31, 10:45 a.m. (no first Gospel hour). Speaker: Argile Smith. Music: Ammer Gayle Whatley. Church-wide lunch will follow the service, catfish and all the fixings at no cost. Pastor: Leland Crawford.
- Bellaire Baptist Church, Bossier City: Revival, July 17,

Evangelist: **Lyndon Longoria**. Pastor: Randy Harper.
- Beech Springs Baptist Church, Minden: Revival, July 17-20. Evangelist: **Price Harris**. Pastor: Ronnie Whitlock.
- Mt. Hope Baptist Church, Oakdale: Revival, July 17-20, 6:30 p.m. nightly. Evangelist: **Jason Townley**. Worship: **Brian Manuel**. Pastor: Brantley Bryan.
- Philadelphia Baptist Church, Deville: **Jumpstart Mondays Revival Meetings**, July 18, July 25 and Aug. 1. Speaker: **Jeff LaBorg**, July 18; **Herb Reavis**, July 25, **Charles Billingsley** in concert, Aug. 1. Pastor: Philip Robertson.

LAGNIAPPE

- **Earnest Little** is available for pulpit supply and interim pastorate. Call 318.663.2770 if interested.
- Weston Baptist Church, Jonesboro: **North Central Baptist Association Concerts of Prayer**, July 17, 7 p.m. Churches in both Jackson and Winn Parishes – EBC, Weston, Vernon and Midway – will unite for a combined prayer service in anticipation of next year's evangelistic crusades. Pastor: Michael McNatt.
- First Baptist Church, Tioga: **Special joint celebration service for Camp USA** at First Baptist Pineville, July 17, 6 p.m. Pray for the children, their sponsors, the host homes and all the churches that will be involved in Camp USA this year. Pastor: Tim Hisaw.
- Trinity Baptist Church, Hammond: **HIS KIDS Summer Camp (special needs ministry)**, July 18-22, from 9 a.m. to noon. Cost: free. Call the church office at 225.294.5536 for more information. Pastor: Bob Adams.
- Calvary Baptist Church, Shreveport: **Summer briefing for all church staff & church members on important legal issues in Louisiana**, July 19, 6:30 p.m. Speaker: Mike Johnson with Freedom Guard and NLBA. Topics to be discussed: current challenges in religious freedom, changes in taxes on LA non-profits, 'gender identity' issues, abortion crisis in Shreveport/Bossier and much more.
- Stevendale Baptist Church, Baton Rouge: **Adventures in Philippi annual multi-language Vacation Bible School**, July 25-29. For more information contact the church at 225.275.4646. Pastor: Steven Young.
- First Baptist Church, DeRidder: **Father/Daughter Luau**, July 29, 6-8 p.m. This event, which is for all ages, will have food, games, fellowship and prizes. Cost: \$15 per family. Attire: Hawaiian shirts and sundresses. Deadline to sign up is July 27. For more information, contact the church office at 337.463.9047. Pastor: Josh Eubanks

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Scripture Crypto

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

gft dznf zn hgen ak azn akdnw, zn akkq azne

swke aznyw zgft, gft onjakdnt azne yf azn zkpjn:

gft zn vna azn enf mk, gft aznl tnugwant.

Inhkft qyfmj syxn:adnfal-skpw

Clues:
Z = T; K = O

Answer to June 30 Scripture Crypto:
First Thessalonians three;four

Whitman from page 9

taught physical education and coached track, football and basketball.

He said serving as a bi-vocational pastor in that capacity had its advantages.

"It was rewarding even though it was tough on me," Whitman said. "When you coach, teach and pastor, you are working really hard each day."

"The reward was that some of the young people I taught and coached later came to know the Lord," he said. "I've told people many times if I was to come back, I would want to do the same thing."

Reminiscing on his 51-year career as a pastor, which also included pastoring at Bethel Baptist Church in Colfax, Fairfield Baptist Church in rural Grant Parish, Lataignier Baptist Church near Lecompte and Mermen-tau Baptist Church, Whitman offered several tips for others serving in the ministry.

First, love the people where you are.

"Everybody makes mis-

takes, everybody sins," he said. "My philosophy through the years is to find a person where they are and move them to where God wants them to be."

Also, mentor individuals in your church and teach them to win people to Jesus, he said.

"We as shepherds need to guide them to Jesus," he said, "and preaching is very, very important. But pastoring people also means getting outside the church walls and reaching out to them, being there with them."

Finally, Whitman said "don't discard a person who is living in sin. Find a person where he is and move him to where he needs to be."

Looking to the future, Whitman said he will stay active in ministry in a number of ways -- helping out with Vacation Bible School, preaching at a church for a Sunday and just standing alongside someone who is hurting.

"I just want to minister to people," he said. "I am



Brian Blackwell photo

During his time as pastor, Lloyd Whitman loved visiting with church members and staff at First Baptist Church in Dry Prong. Whitman retired earlier in the year after pastoring at First Baptist Prong and other churches in central Louisiana for 51 years.

willing to preach anywhere, or minister to anyone who is

hurting. I just want to go out and touch people's lives. I

want them to know Jesus and touch their lives for Him."

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