

*“Be perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect.”*

– Matthew 5:48  
(NASB)

# M BAPTIST Message

Newsjournal for Louisiana Baptists



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July 16, 2015

## God moves with numerous baptisms at Trinity Baptist

BY BRIAN BLACKWELL  
Message Staff Writer

LAKE CHARLES – Trinity Baptist Church planned to baptize 24 people on June 28, as a special celebration of how God has blessed the congregation’s evangelism efforts so far this year.

But by the time the last person came out of the baptismal waters,

46 had been obedient to the Holy Spirit, joining 108 others who have been baptized at Trinity this year.

“When people started responding to that call to come, everyone stood up cheering and clapping,” said Greg Bath, minister of evangelism at Trinity. “It was unbelievable. During our second service

See TRINITY on 11



Greg Bath, minister of evangelism at Trinity Baptist Church in Lake Charles, baptizes Josh Price and his wife, Sarabeth.

Submitted photo



Joe Dupree photo

Rebecca Ebert holds her 8-year-old son Hendrix as she talks about the Make-A-Wish Foundation filming ‘Livin’ Like Hendrix: A Day in the Life Documentary about Hendrix Ebert’ during a break in VBS activities at Elwood Baptist Church in Forest Hill. Even though the family lives in Indiana, she and her husband Randy felt it was important to capture this aspect of her son’s life in a church where they grew up.

*“People lift him up but he does the same for them. He has this ability to know your need.”*

Rebecca Ebert, Hendrix’s mother

## A SPECIAL LIFE

### Make-A-Wish Foundation documenting life of special needs child Hendrix Ebert

BY BRIAN BLACKWELL  
Message Staff Writer

FOREST HILL – Eight-year-old Hendrix Ebert has experienced more setbacks in his young life than most people do in their lifetimes.

Born with a condition where the pulmonary veins between his heart and lungs did not work properly, he had open heart surgery at birth.

His trachea and esophagus were not attached to his stomach; three bones in each middle ear did not form correctly; he has pulmonary disease, and, he is undergoing a protracted program of speech therapy.

Yet, Hendrix is not defined by these difficulties, but by his lovable personality which blesses each person who comes in contact with him.

“People lift him up but he does the same for them,” said his mother, Rebecca. “He has this ability to know your need.

“So many people want him to feel special, but he makes

so many people feel special in return,” she continued. “Hendrix has this incredible zest for life that will touch you for a lifetime.”

His story is being chronicled in a documentary, thanks to a request granted by the Make-A-Wish Foundation.

Since March, a film crew has followed him at his school, church, recreational spots in Indiana, and most recently at Elwood Baptist Church during Vacation Bible School.

Rebecca Ebert said that though they reside in Indiana, she felt it was important to capture this aspect of her son’s life in the church where she and her husband Randy grew up.

She said filming the documentary will serve as a keepsake of Hendrix’s life and hopefully encourage others who are experiencing difficulties of their own.

The film will air sometime in the fall, and although they have been invited to view different film clips, they have declined so far in

See SPECIAL on 10

## INSIDE

■ National Bivo Conference.. 2-15  
■ PBC students homecoming.....3  
■ Insight & Perspective ..... 4-5

■ Religious Liberty .....6  
■ UBC Patriotic Musical.....7  
■ Disaster Relief .....8

■ Christian Flag .....10  
■ Trinity Baptisms .....11  
■ Louisiana Baptist Foundation .....13

■ FYI/Notables .....13  
■ Classifieds.....14  
■ Georgia Barnette Center.....16

# Fred Luter offers 'Iron Men of the SBC' encouragement at National Celebration

BY BRIAN BLACKWELL  
Message Staff Writer

PINEVILLE – Bi-vocational and smaller church pastors are Fred Luter's heroes.

Though his church currently runs around 5,000 in two Sunday morning services, Franklin Avenue Baptist Church in New Orleans at one time had around 50 members when Luter first came there as pastor in 1986. His starting salary was \$100, causing him to rely on his wife to help him obtain basic needs such as health insurance.

Therefore, Luter said, he can relate to the

struggles and trials of those who pastor what are classified as a small church by the Southern Baptist Convention. That

125 or fewer in Sunday school attendance, which is more than 83 percent of the 46,124 churches in the SBC.

"I know the impact small churches have on our convention," Luter said during the recent Bi-Vocational and Small Church National Celebration. "You guys are my heroes."

Luter, a former SBC president, encouraged nearly 100 pastors and their wives in attendance from a total of nine states not to despise small beginnings but instead remain faithful to the end.

"If you are faithful to God, faithful to your calling and faithful to your family, I promise you



Joe Dupree photo

Louisiana College President Rick Brewer (left) chats with Ray Gilder, national coordinator for the Bi-Vocational and Smaller Church Network, before giving a devotion to pastors at LC.

classification is churches with



Joe Dupree photo

Former Southern Baptist Convention President Fred Luter offered encouragement to the bivocational pastors attending the annual Bi-Vocational and Small Church National Celebration at Louisiana College. Luter calls bivo pastors 'his heroes.'

God will be faithful to you," he said.

Luter said that as a pastor knowing what to do can be difficult. He said that every choice will lead to a consequence and the result is good or bad, a blessing or a burden.

The answer to the dilemma, Luter said, is to follow Jesus' example in Matthew 26:36-46 and take the request to the Lord in prayer.

"Throughout his time on earth, Jesus always consulted with his dad," Luter said.

"Learn a lesson from the Mas-

ter. If you are in a predicament, learn a lesson and take it to the Lord in prayer."

Luter's message of encouragement mirrored a purpose of the conference – providing fellowship and much-needed training to help the pastors during their weekly duties at their respective churches. Held June 26-27 at Louisiana College and First Baptist Church in Pineville, the annual conference's theme was "God Has A Plan For You And Your Church."

See BIVOS on 15



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# Philadelphia Baptist celebrates students', chaperones' return home following bus crash

By **BRIAN BLACKWELL**  
Message Staff Writer

DEVILLE – Twenty-four living miracles returned to Philadelphia Baptist Church late June 27, nearly 30 hours after surviving a serious bus accident in Florida on the way to a church camp.

Those students and adult chaperones, along with nearly 40 other students and adults, walked into the church welcome center to a roar of applause, welcome home signs, balloons and plenty of hugs with their loved ones.

"Today is a good day because we all were able to come home and to be able to come home alive and basically in really good shape," Pastor Philip Robertson told the crowd of nearly 200. "There's no way from a human standpoint that everybody should have walked away from that accident alive.

"It shouldn't have happened," he continued. "There should have been some fatalities, but there weren't. Death knocked on the door and God said 'not today. They will live.'"

The crash was reported at 3:10 pm on June 26, just west of State Road 331 near DeFuniak Springs, according to the Florida Highway Patrol.

Troopers reported the 30-passenger bus carrying youth and chaperones left the roadway and hit a tree.

Twenty-five were taken to four different area hospitals for treatment, though none received life-threatening injuries.

Just one of the youth involved in the accident was unable to immediately return on June 29.

The remaining 40 members of the church party were in a second bus and passenger van that were traveling with the bus that wrecked. They were taken to DeFuniak Springs Community Center for the night.

The students' Christian witness through the crisis was commented by a number of people, but receive special notice from one first responder in particular.

A post on Philadelphia Ministry Assistant Debbie Cole Hale's Facebook page cited a comment by Mary Culbertson.

"What an amazing group of resilient children!! I was honored to be involved as one of the first responders at the Community Center and each child I spoke to blessed me immensely. They were nervous, shaken but strong in their faith. Each one had called home. The people in charge from their home church worked diligently, non-stop to notify and locate all of the injured. God was watching over this group and unfortunately, their trip to Florida came to an end before it began but the good news is, they are all coming home. The bond between these 63 teens was an amazing sight to behold."

Robertson also praised the students' response, as well the diligence by the adult chaperones.

"They were like an army," he said. "They were there.



Brian Blackwell photo

Philadelphia Baptist Pastor Philip Robertson leads a group prayer June 27 during a welcome home celebration for youth and adult chaperones whose camp was cut short by a bus accident.

They were doing everything they needed to do, no doubt guided by the Holy Spirit."

Eighth grader Rebekah Daigrepoint connected with the students not long after the bus accident occurred.

Daigrepoint, who knows many of the youth traveling on the trip, called the moment surreal.

"It didn't process with me at first," she recalled.

She believes God strategically placed the students He wanted on the bus and prompted some of them to move seats or the placement of their body

only moments before the accident occurred.

"Many of my friends said they heard an audible voice telling them to move, right before the accident took place," Daigrepoint said. "That was definitely a God thing."

Ricky Belgard, prayer minister at Philadelphia Baptist, also believes God's hand was on the youth and chaperones in the bus that crashed.

When Belgard and others at the church learned of the accident, they contacted the parents and the more than 200 prayer partners who serve as part of

the church's prayer ministry. As they received more information, they then notified the church family and many more prayers were lifted up to God.

The prayer chain then grew as news got out. A number of churches in the area sent out text and emails asking for immediate prayer for all those involved.

"God in His providence had His hand on the youth," he said. "He is our shield. We were praying for a shield of safety as they traveled even before the

See PHILADELPHIA on 8



Brian Blackwell photo

A father and daughter embrace during a welcome back ceremony for the youth and adult chaperones who returned June 27 from a trip to camp. One bus carrying 25 youth and adult chaperones was involved in a serious crash, though, miraculously, no one on board sustained life-threatening injuries.

# LIFE IS SHORT

**FIRST TRUTH: GOD LOVES YOU!**  
The Bible states that God loves us and wants a personal relationship with each of us.  
"For God so loved the world that He gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life." **John 3:16**  
"Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God." **John 1:12**  
"This is love; not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins." **1 John 4:10**

**SECOND TRUTH: MAN IS SINFUL!**  
Man is sinful and therefore separated from God. He can neither experience God's love directly or have a personal relationship with Him.  
"There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one." **Romans 3:10-12**  
"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." **Romans 3:23**  
"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." **Romans 6:23**

**THIRD TRUTH: JESUS CHRIST!**  
Jesus is God's solution to the separation we experience from Him.  
"But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were sinners, Christ died for us." **Romans 5:8**  
Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." **John 14:6**  
"For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance; that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures." **1 Corinthians 15:3-4**

**FOURTH TRUTH: OUR PART!**  
We must accept God's only solution to the problem of sin and separation.  
"By grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast." **Ephesians 2:8-9**  
"Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any one hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him." **Revelation 3:20**

Many of us allow it to pass us by without questioning what comes next, after we die. The Bible teaches us four very basic truths we must understand and act upon in order to assure ourselves that we can go to Heaven when we die.

# The legalization of same-sex marriage: A response

Dear Louisiana Pastors and Leaders,

In the days since June 26, when the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that same-sex marriage is legal in all 50 states, I have read and heard numerous commentaries on the subject and have mulled over what I should write to the Louisiana Baptist family.

There is more to think about than can be conveyed in one letter (I hope you are availing yourself of resources being provided by respected Christian leaders) but I offer a few observations about how we should respond:

**1. We should grieve.** My initial feeling upon hearing the ruling was a profound sense of sadness. I was not surprised by the ruling. It was expected, and was consistent with the rapid acceptance of homosexual behavior in our culture.

But it grieves me greatly that America would ratify as a preferred way of life that which is so contradictory to Christ, His Word, and His Church. It is not as though there was a lack of abundant evidence of a growing anti-Christian sentiment in our country before June 26.

But the Supreme Court decision felt to me like an official public pronouncement against God. I think I understand how Ezekiel felt when the Spirit showed him the religious leaders of Judah worshipping the sun from within the sacred Temple of God. Would they really go

this far? Did they not realize that God's next step was to abandon them? And so I grieve. I grieve for the rebellion against our patient God who has blessed this nation beyond measure. I grieve for the judgment that will surely come. I grieve for my grandchildren. I grieve



DAVID E. HANKINS  
Executive Director  
Louisiana Baptist  
Convention

for the harm (temporal and eternal) to countless souls. I do not disagree with the many wise Christians who have counseled us in recent days not to despair.

I, too, believe God is on his throne and will bring his kingdom to pass. I, too, believe he will bring some good things even out of this bad circumstance. But it is okay to grieve even as we pledge to stand firm and fight the good fight.

**2. We should not change our views and practices on marriage.** I am thankful that the Southern Baptist Convention leaders spoke definitively on this matter a few days ago. Because we take our marching orders from the Bible and not the Supreme Court, and because the Bible is clear on marriage being only between a man and a woman, we will not participate in same-sex marriage in any fashion.

The jury is out on complications that may arise because of our refusal to go along with this cultural shift. We are making legal information available to our churches so we may be prepared as best we know how.

We will assert that any attempt by

the government to force us to participate in same-sex marriages is a violation of our religious liberty. However events unfold, we encourage every Louisiana Baptist to maintain the posture of not affirming, approving, or endorsing homosexual behavior in any form.

**3. We should prepare to become more unpopular.** We need to understand that any disapproval of homosexual behavior will be considered by many as an act of hatred or bigotry.

We will be labeled as "homophobes." Homophobia is a made-up word that is regularly applied in a pejorative way to anyone who believes homosexual behavior is a sin. You don't have to engage in violence or mockery against homosexuals to get the label.

Just suggest that it is wrong. Justice Kennedy, in the majority opinion, identified the disapproval of homosexual behavior as "injustice" *per se*. I hope the church will be kind and respectful toward those with whom it disagrees on this subject. I hope we will be as winsome and congenial as we can be.

But do not expect a response in kind. Unless we are willing to say same-sex marriage in particular and homosexual behavior in general is a good thing, we will be vilified.

But we are in good company. Jesus said, "(The world) hates me because I testify of it that its deeds are evil." (John 7:7).

**4. We should preach the Gospel.**

The truth is, our views on homosexuality are not our most unpopular beliefs.

The most offensive (and most important) of our Christian doctrines is that Jesus Christ is the only way to eternal life and those who do not believe in Him will not experience God's love, but instead will experience God's wrath for eternity.

The world really doesn't like to hear that. But don't stop preaching and teaching it, or the truth about homosexuality, or the whole counsel of God. (II Tim. 4:2).

I pray the Holy Spirit will give you discernment on how much to address critical cultural concerns while not neglecting the myriad of every day sins and struggles those under your influence are experiencing. I pray He will guide you to a proper balance between the prophetic word and the personal touch.

And I pray He will use both to bring sinners, regardless of their offenses, to redemption.

These are challenging days, but also days of opportunity. The need for us, the body of Christ, to be "salt" and "light" has never been greater. Hear the Apostles' admonition:

*"Do all things without grumbling or disputing, that you may prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life."* (Phil. 2:14-16a).

## Suggested policies for Louisiana Baptist churches on marriage, membership

ALEXANDRIA – Louisiana Baptist personnel have assembled a collection of guidelines for LBC affiliated churches to access to assist them in protecting themselves from liabilities arising from the U.S. Supreme Court's recent ruling that overturned the traditional definition of marriage as between one man and one woman.

These sample policies cover a church's statement of faith, beliefs about marriage as well as qualifications for and expectations of members, leaders, volunteers and workers.

Although each has been thoroughly reviewed, there are limitations explained in the notes at the bottom of this article.

Additional resources for pastors and churches are posted on [www.LouisianaBaptists.org](http://www.LouisianaBaptists.org), including a link to a handbook produced by the Alliance Defending Freedom which offers an Appendix A that contains other sample resources for churches as well for Christian schools and not-for-profit ministries.

You may access the ADF handbook "Protecting Your Ministry" directly using this URL:

<http://www.alliancedefending-freedom.org/content/campaign/2014/church/SOGI-Handbook.pdf>

### SUGGESTED POLICIES FOR LOUISIANA BAPTIST CHURCHES CONCERNING MARRIAGE & MEMBERSHIP

#### 1. Statement of Faith:

This church affirms (or adopts or subscribes to) the doctrinal statement, The Baptist Faith & Message as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention on June 14, 2000.

#### 2. Marriage:

God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption. Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race. Therefore, it shall be the policy of this church consistent with this expression of our faith that no ceremony or action by any minister or representative of this church shall attempt to join in marriage any persons other than one man and one woman. Prior to every marriage

ceremony performed at the church, the Bride and Groom shall present a valid Louisiana Marriage License and a copy of the Certificate of Live Birth for each person to be married.

#### OR

God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption. Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race. Therefore, in order to better guard against any attempt by persons to be married in contradiction to our understanding of marriage, it shall be the policy of this church consistent with this expression of our faith that no marriage ceremony shall be allowed on the church premises for any person other than a member of the church at the time of the marriage ceremony. Prior to every marriage ceremony performed at the church,

the Bride and Groom shall present a valid Louisiana Marriage License and a copy of the Certificate of Live Birth for each person to be married.

#### OR

God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption. Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race. Therefore, it shall be the policy of this church consistent with this expression of our faith and irrespective of location that no ceremony or action by any minister or representative of this church shall attempt to join in marriage any persons other than one man and one woman. Prior to every marriage ceremony performed by a minister or representative of this church irrespective of the location of the marriage ceremony, the

See POLICIES on 9

# We do not embrace a lifestyle that contradicts the Bible

It is a defining, sad statement I must acknowledge that the Supreme Court of the United States has ruled this month that same-sex marriage is legal in all 50 states. I would remind people, and indeed of this country, the Supreme Court did not define marriage, and nor is it entitled to re-define it.

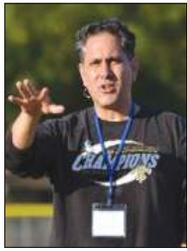
Marriage was created by God in the Garden of Eden. This is the same God who created man and woman. God's decisions are neither up for review nor revision by any man-made court in the land. God makes a clear statement about the definition of marriage in the Holy Scripture: *"Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh"* (Genesis 2:24).

Many mighty nations including the Greek and Roman empires have all disappeared when they walked down the road of blatant rejection of God's moral absolutes. We need to pray for our nation. If we continue to reject God's principles and precepts we cannot expect to have His hand on this country.

The President made a statement in his gay pride event he hosted in the White House last week.

He said, "There has been an incred-

ible shift in attitudes across the country." What the president does not understand is the shift in attitudes he refers to is the moral decline of a nation. He sees it as good; people are seeing it as a final step of acceptance. However, it is accepting wrong as right. Accepting sin is nothing to be proud of. There is definitely a shift. The President went on to thank the LGBT community for all that they had helped him accomplish during his time as President.



**TOM SHEPARD**  
Pastor  
Church of Addis  
Addis, La.

He said, "A lot of what we've accomplished over these last six and a half years has been because of you." He also

noted there were two states where gay marriage was legal when he took office, but now there are 37. The President is leading this nation on a sinful course, because the President has no moral compass.

When a man has no moral compass our right from wrong becomes very grey.

Lastly, let me say this to the people in our congregation who have LGBT children, or you yourself have or are struggling with this. We LOVE you! Christ loves you! There is no changing that. The Bible teaches us to love one another. My sin may be different from yours, but the fact of the matter is, it is

the LACK of a relationship with Christ that prevents one from going to heaven, not the particular sin. However, there is a difference between sin and iniquity.

Sin is something we are all subject to because we live in a fallen world. We are ALL sinners, and we ALL fall short of the glory of God. In repenting from our sin, we are consciously making an effort to do the right thing.

Iniquity is when we know something is wrong, but we purposely embrace it, and knowingly and wantonly participate in it when we know God tells us to do different.

We are all broken in some way or another. Jesus Christ is the only fix for our brokenness. Only Christ can fill the void that we constantly try to fill by our own weak means.

Relationship after broken relationship, drug after drug, drink after drink, can't fill that void.

It is like putting a band-aid over a bullet hole. It seems to look OK on the surface, but the actuality of the situation is grave indeed. It simply comes down to the brokenness of the individual and a choice every one of us has to make... Turn from what we believe is the fix, and embrace the ONLY thing that can heal you... Jesus Christ. He, my friend, is our only hope.

So what is our reaction as a church

to the shift away from moral absolutes in our nation? It is a simple biblical response.

Jesus said to love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength. (Meaning our relationship and walk with Christ needs to be paramount).

However, the context of the verse goes on to say... Love your neighbor as yourself (which means we are to love ALL people unconditionally, this is a by-product of the change that has occurred inside of us).

Therefore our response is to PRAY for our Nation, PRAY for all people groups and PRAY we can LOVE unconditionally all people groups in a way that shows them the person of Christ.

Let me be clear, we are not embracing the sin at all, we do not embrace a lifestyle that contradicts what the Bible clearly defines as marriage. We need to be clearly viewed as followers of Christ.

As a minister of the Gospel of Christ I cannot change nor back down from what the Bible clearly teaches. We need a great awakening in this world. Christianity was born into a much darker world than what we are experiencing here in the United States today. So take heart, we are a light unto the world, a city set on a hill, and that is the hope of Jesus Christ!

## If we follow Jesus, persecution is inevitable — are you ready?

I'm sure by now everyone is aware of the recent Supreme Court decision legalizing homosexual marriage across the nation.

If you have turned on a TV or logged on to the internet in the past few days you are also aware of the outpouring of opinions from people on both sides of the issue.

While the issue of homosexuality is an important and pertinent topic of discussion, and one of which I am convinced that Scripture is very clear on, it is not the topic I want to discuss now.

I want to talk about something that I believe is a little deeper and that some people may not even realize yet. That something is persecution.

When was the last time you thought about persecution? When was the last time you thought about it in the context of you or your family being persecuted right here at home?

Sadly, I must confess this is not a topic I meditate on often.

This is not something that we experience very often here in the United States, at least not blatantly, and we have taken that freedom for granted. I believe that is freedom that we will find more and more lacking in the coming years.

The legalization of homosexual

marriage is not the root issue. After all, homosexuality is simply an expression of sin that is no different from adultery, divorce, promiscuity, lust, or gossip.



**SHERWON WILLIAMSON**  
Member  
Magnolia Baptist Church  
Saline, La.

All of which carry the same punishment; namely eternal separation from God in Hell! All of which also carry the same solution; namely repentance of sin and faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior!

Trusting in His work on the cross as payment for the penalty of our transgression!

The root issue is rebellion against a Holy God.

The recent ruling simply marks a societal acceptance, and even an applauding, of that rebellion. It marks a nation that is abandoning the absolute authority of God and His Word, "exchanging the truth of God for a lie" (Romans 1:25), and each man "doing what is right in his own eyes" (Judges 21:25).

I have wept over the state of our nation, and the state of the church as many professing Christians have compromised, and even twisted, God's Word attempting to justify their own sinful lifestyle or condone the sinful behavior of another.

It is this societal acceptance of sin that will cause any who hold firm to the truth of the Bible and the abso-

lute moral standard set forth by God to find ourselves increasingly in the minority. I have already seen some people calling for the removal of any freedom of the exercise of religion by any organization or person that may be deemed discriminatory. I am seeing Christians being called bigoted, hateful, discriminatory, unloving, and judgmental among other things, some of which I dare not repeat. This condemnation of Christians is coming from society as a whole, and it is also coming from friends and family. People are already losing family, friends, jobs, and personal businesses because of their faith in Jesus and it will only get worse from here.

So, how do we respond to this persecution when it comes?

1. **We rejoice!** Matthew 5:11-12 says, "Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and falsely say every kind of evil against you because of Me. Be glad and rejoice, because your reward is great in heaven. For that is how they persecuted the prophets who were before you." We are able to rejoice in the midst of persecution knowing that we are not the first or only ones to be persecuted, but most importantly because the persecution is temporal and our eternal reward in heaven is great!

2. **We are patient!** 1 Corinthians 4:12 says, "When we are reviled, we bless; when we are persecuted,

we endure it". We do not respond to adversity as the world does. We bless those who curse us, we love our enemies, and endure persecution with much longsuffering.

3. **We glorify God!** "But if anyone suffers as a Christian, he should not be ashamed, but should glorify God with that name", 1 Peter 4:16. Everything, even our suffering and persecution, is ultimately for the glory of God. If we find ourselves in persecution of any form let us glorify God in it; responding in a way to be counted worthy of being called a follower of Christ.

4. **We pray!** Jesus tells us to love our enemies and pray for those that persecute us (Matthew 5:44). He also set the example for us. We find Jesus in prayer anytime He faced trial and tribulation.

If Christ, who is God manifested in flesh, found it important to pray and depend on the Holy Spirit in times of persecution, how much more dependent should we be in our fleshly weakness!

We should not be surprised when persecution comes, after all Jesus warned us it would (John 15:20).

We should not even be surprised if it comes from people who claim the name of Christian (Acts 20:29-31, 2 Timothy 4:3-5, 1 John 2:19).

If we walk in the footsteps of Jesus persecution is inevitable. Are you ready?

# In response to Supreme Court ruling, Grant Parish justice of peace resigns

By PHILIP TIMOTHY  
Managing Editor

POLLOCK – Patricia Gunter stands firm on her faith and her beliefs.

On June 26, following the ruling by the U.S. Supreme court to make same-sex marriage legal throughout the land, Gunter quietly turned in her resignation which became effective June 30. She is the first justice in the peace in Louisiana to resign in response to the Supreme Court ruling.

A justice of the peace conducts marriages, authorizes evictions and arbitrates disputes valued at less than

\$5,000. The 390 justices of the peace in Louisiana are not paid but can keep half of the filing fees.

Connie Moore, head of the Louisiana Justice of the Peace and Constable Association, told the Baton Rouge Morning Advocate in a July 1 article she has been getting a lot of questions since June 26. Some JPs flatly refuse to issue licenses to same-sex couples, while some are wondering how little they can get away with, and others are asking how to fill out the forms now.

“God’s word is the ultimate authority,” said Gunter the morning of July 1. “He clearly laid it all out when he

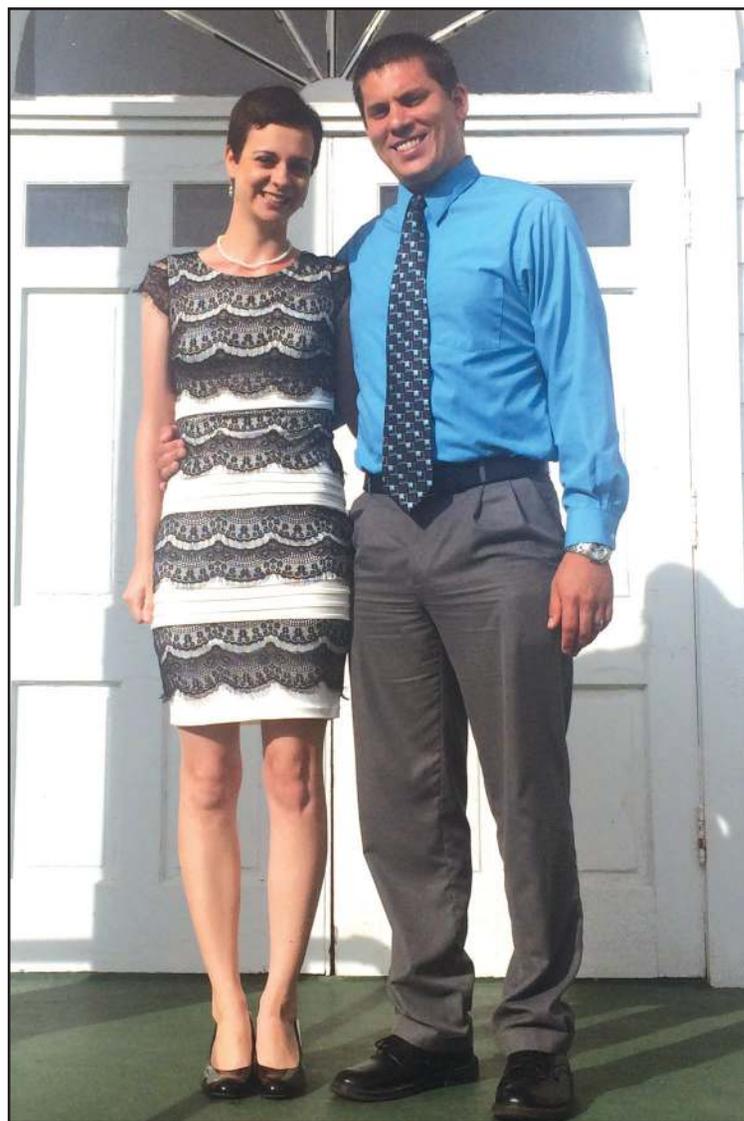
said that marriage is between one man and one woman. Therefore, when the Supreme Court ruling allowed same-sex marriages, I felt, as a Christian, it was something (resigning) I had to do.”

Gunter is not the only justice of the peace struggling with a conflict between closely held religious beliefs and job requirements.

“I could not uphold the oath that I swore, which states I will uphold the laws of this state and of the country,” she said. “Besides I am much more afraid of God than I am of man. I am going to go along with what God commands.

“She was really not given an option,” said Pastor Brian Gunter, pastor of First Baptist Pollock. “The attorney general’s office has told them they are required to perform their duties or they will face ethics complaints and/or possibly be a target of lawsuits.

“As a pastor I will not perform a same-sex marriage, I was put here by God,” Brian Gunter said, “not man. I mean if they can fine a baker for not baking a cake and then sue her for thousands of dollars you know it is only a matter time before they come after us all.



Submitted photo

Brian and Patricia Gunter do not want to officiate at same-sex weddings because it goes against their beliefs. In response to the Supreme Court ruling on June 26, Patricia resigned as a justice of the peace in Grant Parish. Brian is the pastor at First Baptist Church in Pollock.

As a matter of fact, our religious liberties are already under attack,” said Gunter, who fears the government will remove a church’s tax-exempt status if a church does not bow to its wishes and perform same-sex marriages. “We should not forget the fact that our religious liberties are protected in the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution and written by a Baptist preacher John Leland.”

While the Gunters realize taking the stand they are taking may not be a popular one, it was a decision they made together after a great deal of prayer.

“I did not do this to gain any notoriety or popularity,” said Gunter, who served just four months of a six-year term. “Brian and I discussed the possibility back in February when I ran for the office. We decided back then that if the court ruled the way it did I would resign if it became law. We did a lot of praying back then and Friday (June 26) seeking God’s wisdom before I made my decision. And He made it apparent I needed to resign.”

Patricia Gunter, a mother of four, said she was actually relieved her resignation has

become official.

“Yes, I am relieved. To be honest, I didn’t want to be in the middle nor was I trying to become a celebrity,” she said. “While I do appreciate Gov. [Bobby] Jindal’s executive order to protect my religious liberty, I really didn’t want them (state government) to tell me to just wait until they could get it all sorted out.”

Brian Gunter believes God has orchestrated the couple’s stand.

“This is not coincidence but God’s providence that my wife was interviewed by a Baton Rouge newspaper and a radio station,” he said. “And I am being interviewed by a TV station. God put this together.

“It is time for Christians to not only stand up for the truth but to also speak up,” said Gunter, “before it is too late. I know too many people, especially pastors, who believe that by hiding under a rock this will all go away. It won’t. Because of what is happening in the courts, the ones attacking religious liberty are not hiding any more. They are coming after us. We need to address these issues now while we can. We need to take a stand now!”

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@CPrantguy

# Rousing patriotic salute at University Baptist packed out

By R.C. MILLER  
Regional Reporter

BATON ROUGE – Randy Gurie isn't claiming any out-of-body experiences, but he does own up to a vision that eventually filled University Baptist Church's sanctuary to capacity on July 4th.

Because for Gurie, it wasn't a matter of "seeing is believing."

"For me, it was 'believing is seeing,'" Gurie says. "From the beginning, I literally saw everything about this program, from the lighting to the music performances."

And it resulted in the community program, "A Patriotic Salute to America."

The red-white-and-blue program featured performances by the Baton Rouge Concert Band, a community choir and a group of soloists that included one by the now retired "Voice of the LSU Tigers" Jim Hawthorne and narration by Louisiana Public Broadcasting President and CEO Beth

Courtney.

That's not forgetting performances by the five-member gospel group Celebration, which hosted the event. Gurie and fellow vocalists Kevin Hambrice, Fred Dressel, Lionel Bailey and Trippe Hawthorne have been performing in this group for 20 years.

They perform year-round at churches and events in the Baton Rouge area, sometimes traveling around the state and in Mississippi. Those programs have always been made up of gospel music.

"Then, last Christmas, we performed Christmas music with the Baton Rouge Symphony," Gurie says. "But we had never performed patriotic music. This program was the first time we sang patriotic music."

The group stepped in and out of the songs, allowing other performers to take the spotlight. The choir, with a combined membership of Baton Rouge Symphony Chorus and various church choirs

was accompanied by Baton Rouge Concert Band, made up of all-volunteer community members.

And some room was set aside for a little comedy with Willery Capron's impersonation of the late Minnie Pearl.

The show played out on a video backdrop of the United States' varied landscapes, patriotic monuments and diverse population.

Finally, the crowd was asked to join in the finale chorus of "God of Our Fathers," which ended with a standing ovation, not to mention lots of inquiries directed at Gurie.

"Everyone wanted to know when we are going to do this again," Gurie says. "One man said we'd need to get a bigger venue for next year."

It's true. If Celebration starts planning for reprise in 2016, the group will need a bigger space than University Baptist Church's 600-plus seats.

"We decided to host it at University Baptist, because

most of us are members there," Gurie says. "The enthusiasm was so great, and more people would turn out for it."

Of course, a bigger space would mean more expenses. Most performers donated their time, but there were still expenses that required corporate sponsorship. More sponsors would be needed for a bigger program, so a second program is still speculative.

Still, Gurie is enjoying the results achieved by the 2015 "A Patriotic Salute to America."

"It speaks to a lot of us individually and corporately," he says. "As a nation, we're 239 years young, and we're experiencing the growing pains of any entity of what we were born out of. We're still finding our way, and we're struggling with who we are and how we want to treat each other and people around the world."

But when July 4 comes around, Gurie sees people putting their differences aside, just as they did at University Baptist Church on July 2.

"July 4, more than any other holiday, is the day that we, as a nation, can put aside our pettiness and differences and come together and say, 'We are Americans,'" Gurie says. "America is a work in progress, and what grows out of futility is the understanding that we are a people made to have fellowship with God."

Everyone experiences a void in their lives, Gurie says, which many try to fill with money, control, power, prestige or relationships with other people.

"But only with God can you fill that void," Gurie says. "You realize that everything else in life is futile. 'When you've tried everything else, you give God a chance.'"

And even when the nation seemingly doesn't want to give God a chance, God still stands by the United States.

"He hangs with us as a dotting parent would," Gurie says. "I believe as a nation, we will regain our rightful place in the world."

A new novel by Randy Willis, co-author of *Twice a Slave*

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# DR volunteers lead three to Christ during flood cleanup

BY BRIAN BLACKWELL  
Message Staff Writer

SHREVEPORT – Two Louisiana Baptist Disaster Relief volunteers were nearly speechless recently and for good reason.

While cleaning out of homes that were damaged by recent floodwaters of the Red River, Freddie Arnold and Ginger McBride witnessed first-hand to others who subsequently accepted Christ as their Lord and Savior there.

“It adds a spark of enthusiasm,” said Arnold, a white hat with Louisiana Baptist Disas-

ter Relief. “And it encourages everyone to be evangelistic.”

Arnold’s conversion experience was with a then-Mormon who worked with a friend from First Baptist Church in Franklinton on a mud-out team. After suffering from overheating, the man stayed behind for a couple of days, which led to a series of conversations about Christ with Arnold and others at the host site of Summer Grove Baptist Church in Shreveport – before eventually converting from Mormonism to Christianity.

“He came to tell me he

was saved and I told him that was fantastic,” Arnold recalls. “Before he could even get across the room where we were, I heard him call his wife over the phone and others there his news.”

Meanwhile, McBride was assessing flooded homes with Virginia Disotell, another disaster relief chaplain, when they encountered a man whose house took in nearly five feet of water.

After evaluating the home’s damage and visiting with him, they asked if he knew where he would spend eternity.

When the man said he was going to heaven, the next question was, ‘How do you know?’

That’s when he stopped short, explaining he did not want to answer incorrectly.

After sharing the Eternal Life tract and praying with him, the conversation continued.

“At that point, he began

to understand the difference between believing and trusting,” McBride recalled. “We continued through the tract. I asked him if he had ever prayed a prayer receiving God’s gift of eternal life. He said he hadn’t, but he wanted to. He prayed, asking God to forgive his sins, leading to him trusting Jesus as his Lord and Savior. He lost everything in the flood, his whole world, but that day, he gained his whole life, eternal life.”

But that wasn’t the only time McBride was on hand to see someone accept Christ while she was working with disaster relief on site.

A few days earlier, a fellow believer and friend called to ask if McBride would meet her to share Christ with a man she knew.

Soon, McBride met them for a brief visit, which led to the man accepting Christ as his personal Savior and Lord.

McBride said seeing someone become a Christian while

on duty reminds her of why disaster relief exists. Each person who made a decision was connected with a local church for follow-up.

“It’s something you have to experience,” said McBride, a chaplain who is a member of Gloster Baptist Church. “I consider it a blessing that the Lord wants to use me.”

McBride asks for all Louisiana Baptists to continue praying for their work and presence there.

“Pray for disaster relief teams as they continue to work in the flooded areas,” she said. “Pray for the health and safety of the men and women working in extreme Louisiana heat.”

“Pray for the families that were affected by the flood. Pray for their health and safety, as well,” she continued. “Pray that their lives will be restored. Pray that the Holy Spirit continue to flood their lives with His peace, love and forgiveness of sin.”

## Philadelphia from page 3

accident. As you look at the pictures you can truly see God’s

hand over the youth because it easily could have been tragic.”

Before the youth and chaperones returned to the church, Belgard and other church staff led a time of prayer in the worship center.

Among those who spoke was Derek Griffin, the driver of the bus involved in the accident. He complimented the youth and chaperones on their resilience in the situation.

“I’m just very grateful for the prayers,” Griffin said. “We felt the prayers. I’m just glad to be here.”

Another person who spoke was Jessie Campbell, a youth department volunteer who works with those who traveled on the trip.

“Today I was thinking how things happen like this,” he said. “The devil thinks he’s got them, but God has a purpose for them and He’ll use them for that purpose. For them to one day be able to say ‘look what I went through’ and share with others – it’ll be an awesome testimony for them.”

### COUNTING BLESSINGS

Heather Stracener was among the parents thankful her student was not killed in the accident.

After the accident, Stracener

learned that her son Zachary was among those on the bus that crashed.

“When I got a call from him saying ‘I’m OK’, there’s nothing much sweeter I’ve ever heard,” she said.

She said Zachary and others in the youth group were praying before the trip that God would show up in a mighty way.

“On Thursday Zachary and his friends were so giddy about going to church camp,” she said. “They couldn’t wait to see what God will do. He definitely showed up and showed off yesterday afternoon.”

“We’re so thankful we don’t have 25 funerals we are planning,” she continued. “We are thankful and are thankful to see our baby.”

Truly, the near-death experience was a reminder to all about the importance of not taking a single day of life for granted.

“Remember every day to hug the people you love and tell them how much you love them, because our lives are like a vapor, here today and gone tomorrow,” Robertson told the crowd gathered Saturday night June 27. “We’re going to do a lot of hugging tonight but do it everyday. Every single day, hug em jup, tell em how much you love them and thank God for the incredible gift of life.”

# Policies from page 4

Bride and Groom shall present a valid Marriage License and a copy of the Certificate of Live Birth for each person to be married.

### 3. Membership

In addition to the other qualifications for membership in this church, it shall be required that each candidate for membership affirmatively declare to the applicable church minister or representative that he/she is not a practicing homosexual or transgendered person and does not advocate or support that lifestyle.

**OR**

In addition to the other qualifications for membership in this church, it shall be required that each candidate for membership affirmatively declare to the applicable church minister or representative that he/she is not a homosexual or transgendered person and does not advocate or support that lifestyle.

**OR**

In addition to the other qualifications for membership in this church, it shall be required that each candidate for membership affirmatively declare to the applicable church minister or representative that he/she concurs with and will strive to live according to the biblical convictions expressed in the church's doctrinal statement (which includes the aforementioned position on marriage and sexual conduct).

### 4. Qualifications for positions of Leadership, Volunteers or Workers in the church

In addition to the other quali-

cations to be an elected leader and/or to act as a volunteer or worker in this church or in any of its sponsored activities wherever located, it shall be required that each proposed leader, volunteer or worker affirmatively declare to the applicable church minister or representative that he/she is not a practicing homosexual or transgendered person and does not advocate or support that lifestyle.

**OR**

In addition to the other qualifications to be an elected leader and/or to act as a volunteer or worker in this church or in any of its sponsored activities wherever located, it shall be required that each proposed leader, volunteer or worker affirmatively declare to the applicable church minister or representative that he/she is not a homosexual or transgendered person and does not advocate or support that lifestyle.

**OR**

In addition to the other qualifications to be an elected leader and/or to act as a volunteer or worker in this church or in any of its sponsored activities wherever located, it shall be required that each proposed leader, volunteer or worker affirmatively declare to the applicable



church minister or representative that he/she concurs with and will strive to live according to the biblical convictions expressed in the church's doctrinal statement (which includes the aforementioned position on marriage and sexual conduct).

### 5. As an added measure.

A church and its minister(s) may elect to cease serving as state registered officiants for marriage ceremonies. Couples wanting to be married would be directed to the local civil officials to secure a state authorized wedding license and have a civil official conduct the civil marriage ceremony.

The church and its minister(s) could conduct a religious wedding ceremony according to church policy.

### NOTES:

1. These are sample policies and are not guaranteed to meet each and every church's situation and needs and are not intended to be used verbatim as written.

Each policy should be approved and modified with help of legal counsel to address each church's situation and needs.

2. There can be no future guarantee that the user of these policies

will be immune from litigation and adverse rulings.

Court decisions are dependent upon the facts presented in court, the judge and/or jury, the state of the law at the time of the litigation and factors which cannot be anticipated in advance.

3. Factors which may affect the enforceability of these policies include but are not limited to exceptions which may be made in marriage ceremonies or membership in the church.

For example, will the church marry persons where one or both of the participants were previously divorced? Will the church allow membership for persons who have committed adultery?

In other words, is homosexuality singled out for disparate treatment from other sexual acts which are overlooked? A rationale should be considered and expressed for any disparate treatment of persons who violate sexual commandments forming the basis of the church's faith and message.

4. Each church which may adopt these or other similar policies is an independent entity which is in complete control of whatever policies, if any, it may adopt concerning these matters.

The Louisiana Baptist Convention does not and cannot dictate to any church what policies and practices it should adopt.

These suggested policies are merely offered as a guide and beginning point for each church to consider these current issues and formulate its own decisions concerning the content of its own individual policies and procedures.

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Special from page one



Joe Dupree photo

order to enjoy “the surprise” of watching the final product.

“When we first met with the producer, he asked our vision and we weren’t sure,” she said. “Parents don’t have to have all the answers when you have a special needs child.

“It takes a village of support to make it through each day,” she added. “This film hopefully expresses thanks to those who walk alongside us. We want to give hope to those who have special needs children and allow Hendrix, 15 years from now, to look at how far he has come since the filming of the documentary.”

Relatives as well as members of Elwood Baptist Church are excited Hendrix’s story will be told.

Louisiana Public Service Commissioner Clyde Holloway, the young boy’s grandfather, said Hendrix exudes God’s love, and, just as people are touched by



Joe Dupree photo

Since March, a film crew has followed Hendrix Ebert, most recently at a Vacation Bible School at Elwood Baptist Church in Forest Hill.

his upbeat personality after spending only a few moments with him, viewers will experience it, too, while watching documentary.

“You realize his life is precious,” Holloway said. “God has a purpose for all of us including Hendrix.”

Mike Evans, pastor of Elwood Baptist Church, said his congregation was ecstatic

to play a part in the project.

“It’s an extreme honor for us to accommodate Make-A-Wish,” Evans said. “We couldn’t be happier. He’s such a delightful kid.” He also added that the extended film making process “speaks volumes” of the organization’s commitment to children facing medical struggles and their families.

Hendrix Ebert steals the show as Vacation Bible School volunteers and participants sing along with the eight-year-old boy on July 7. His story is being chronicled in a documentary, thanks to a request granted by the Make-A-Wish Foundation.

# Hineston woman starts Facebook page to get Christians voice heard again

By BRIAN BLACKWELL  
Message Staff Writer

HINESTON – A Hineston woman has started a Facebook page to get Christian voices heard again.

Tiffany Busby Dunn, a member of Mt. Moriah Baptist Church in Hineston, started “The Christian Flag

Movement” Facebook page around 2:15 am on June 29. By 4 pm, the page had received 394 likes.

As of July 9, the page has received more than 2,500 likes and the page had been shared 141 times.

Dunn said her heart was burdened over the attacks Christians in the United States

have faced over the past several years. After talking with a friend who planned to display the flag in her home, Dunn felt led to take a stand and start the Facebook page.

“We have been discouraged from public prayer, and told that the Bible is no longer welcome in most schools,” she said. “We have been

criticized for our morals and fundamental belief system, all the while being told we should be more open minded to the beliefs of others.

“The symbol of the Cross has been attacked on many occasions by different groups because it is ‘offensive to them’ while Christians are expected to suffer in silence and not say anything when something offends us,” she continued. “If we do speak up we are labeled ‘judgmental’ or ‘prejudice.’”

Dunn hopes all Christian denominations will take up the challenge to display the Christian flag on Facebook and in their homes. She is calling for believers to post the flag icon on “The Christian Flag Movement” page along with specifying the location.

“I feel that Christians in

America have to take a step,” Dunn said. “Just one step in the right direction to show that united we stand, and we are tired of having our religion attacked. We live in a society that goes to extremes to protect the right of all other groups, many times at the expense of Christians.

“I want to send a clear message to the American society that we are here, and we have rights, too,” she continued. “We, as Christians, answer to a much higher authority than today’s society or even the American government. I feel that by starting this movement we can peacefully stand in solidarity with one another to make this statement.”

For more information, visit [facebook.com/thechristianflagmovement](http://facebook.com/thechristianflagmovement).



## Trinity from page one



Greg Bath, minister of evangelism at Trinity Baptist, baptizes one of 46 people who were baptized during a June 28 special service.



Cousins Camille Lyons and Avery Waldmeier are all smiles following their baptism during Declaration Celebration.



Trinity Baptist Children's Minister Jerry Parmentier prepares to baptize Judah Shirley during a baptism service June 28.



William and Briana Huffman, husband and wife, embrace after they were baptized during a special service at Trinity Baptist.

of the day, we were here way past 12:00 (when the service was scheduled to end) and no one had left.

"No one wanted to leave," he added. "They wanted to see God moving."

The special emphasis, designated as Declaration Celebration, was promoted by the staff for several months.

Nine new believers were scheduled for baptism during the first worship service, with 15 slated in the second. But time also was reserved for additional baptisms, and, just in case, TBC Pastor Steve James had brought a bag with t-shirts, shorts and towels to accommodate those who made decisions that day.

The newly baptized members represented a broad range of ages and other demographics, including four married couples, and a grandfather and his grandson.

Among those baptized were Josh and Sarabeth Price, who felt led to take that step together as husband and wife.

"I told Josh that this was something we needed to do together as a family," she said. "This is something that if we have children we will be able to share with them and that's exciting. This was so special because it's a milestone for us."

He added that the day was one he never will forget.

"It was an experience we will treasure," he said. "When we heard about this day happening, we signed up because we felt it was a way to declare our faith in Christ. If it's something



Trinity Baptist Pastor Steve James baptizes Rodney Hebert during Declaration Celebration. Rodney and his grandson were baptized during the same worship service June 28.

that glorifies God, do it."

For Mike Willis, seeing so many people he knew come forward to declare their faith in Christ through believer's baptism made Declaration Celebration particularly special.

His son already was on the roster to be baptized that day, but when Pastor James invited others to accept Christ, Willis' younger brother not only responded but asked to be baptized that day, too.

Willis knew others who came forward during the service, including a co-worker and his neighbor's wife, and said tears were flowing by the end of the service.

"It was powerful to see that take place," he said. "The Spirit moved like never before at that church."

The Declaration Celebration came on the heels of an already busy year of evangelism for the church.

More than 2,000 attended a Real Encounter event that featured high-speed motorcycle stunts and a gospel presentation. There, 194 accepted Christ.

During an EPIC student weekend, 350 youth attended, with 18 making salvation decisions.

Then, at its recent Vacation Bible School, 1,218 children registered, with 22 of them declaring Jesus as Lord and Savior.

Bath said seeing so many people respond to the call for baptism reflects an attitude of wanting to proclaim the gospel to a fallen world.

"At Trinity as a whole, we aim to share the gospel," Bath said. "We aim to share the gospel with all who come on our campus and everyone in the community and this represents what we're about. It represents who we are."

God blesses those who mourn...  
Matthew 5:4

Message spots like the one above, are currently airing in NE Louisiana and are coming soon to New Orleans!

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# Building a legacy of giving within our churches

By JERRY LOVE

Planned Giving Director

ALEXANDRIA – Each of us typically spends our life acquiring “things” to meet the needs of basic survival. We also acquire “things” to satisfy our desires and to make life more comfortable or efficient.

These “things” can include a home, household goods and

furnishings, some means of transportation, real estate, various types of collectibles, stocks, bonds, – the list goes on.

For some these things are very meager. For others it can represent great wealth. No matter what monetary value these things represent, God expects us to care for and use these things wisely for His

glory.

And unless we can spend our last dollar on the day we die, we will leave something behind that will need to be transferred to another person or entity.

Unfortunately few of us put much thought into how to use our “things” to further God’s kingdom.

At best we tithe from current income to our church and give occasionally to special offerings.

But to be good stewards of the possessions God has entrusted to us, we must plan for the wise use during life and the wise disposition at death of our assets.

The Louisiana Baptist Foundation encourages local churches to implement a program to educate its members on how to utilize their personal assets for God’s glory during and after their lifetime. Combining Biblical teaching with estate planning is the basis for what the Foundation refers to as Estate Stewardship.

Demographic statistics tell us that due to the aging of both the Depression era generation and Baby Boomers, an enormous transfer of wealth to the next generation has begun, and will continue for the next 30 years.

One recent estimate of the amount of this transfer is in the neighborhood of \$30 trillion in the United States alone.

By educating its membership on estate stewardship,



local congregations can benefit from a portion of this wealth transfer and direct these assets toward furthering the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

One church that has undertaken this task of educating its members is First Baptist Church of Lafayette.

Over the past years the church, with the support of the Louisiana Baptist Foundation, has implemented its Living Legacy Foundation to encourage members to make gifts that support three general areas of the church’s ministry: facilities, local ministry and missions.

The staff has used several different opportunities to promote estate stewardship and giving to Living Legacy, including short messages in the Sunday order of service and

church newsletter, banquets, seminars and sermons.

Later this month Living Legacy of First Baptist Church will present a unique approach to promoting estate stewardship.

The Hoppers, a Southern Gospel music family, will be featured in concert on July 30. (Information can be found at [www.fbclaf.org](http://www.fbclaf.org).)

First Baptist will use the opportunity to provide information to those in attendance as to how they can support the future ministry of FBC through Living Legacy or any other ministry that God lays on their heart.

Two things are important for churches to keep in mind when starting a program of estate stewardship:

1) It’s a marathon, not a sprint. Promoting estate stewardship, as with all stewardship, should be an ongoing process. Assign a committee with good lay leadership to explore ways to keep estate stewardship in front of the congregation without adding extra burden to the staff.

2) The flood gates of giving will not magically open. Individual planning takes time. Lay a good foundation of education on giving and the gifts will come in time.

The Louisiana Baptist Foundation can assist your church with starting an estate stewardship program by providing guidance to staff members and laypersons.

The Foundation can provide education to the congregation and also assist individuals who have the desire to leave a gift to your church.

Please call the LBF office at 1-877-523-4636 or visit [www.LBFinfo.org](http://www.LBFinfo.org) to learn more about the Foundation’s services.

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<p><b>Monday, August 17th</b></p> <p>WORSHIP LEADER:              REV. KEITH MADDOX              DIRECTOR              CAMP LIVING WATERS</p> <p>PASTOR BRAD MILES              OLIVE BAPTIST CHURCH              LUMBERTON, MISS.</p>	<p><b>Monday, August 24th</b></p> <p>PASTOR TONY MONK              ENTERPRISE              BAPTIST CHURCH              NEW ALBANY, MISSISSIPPI</p> <p>WORSHIP LEADER:              PINE GROVE              BAPTIST CHURCH              PICAYUNE, MISSISSIPPI</p>
<p><b>Monday, August 31st</b></p> <p>BERNIE CARBO              EVANGELIST              FORMER MAJOR              LEAGUE BASEBALL              HALL OF FAME              MOBILE, ALABAMA</p> <p>WORSHIP LEADER:              REV. TERREL STEWART              MUSIC TEACHER              NORTHLAKE CHRISTIAN              SCHOOL</p>	

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# LC and Rapides Parish School Board strike dual enrollment agreement

BY NORM MILLER  
LC Communications

PINEVILLE – Rapides Parish School Board (RPSB) voted July 7 to partner with Louisiana College to allow qualified high school students to enroll at the college in up to six hours of college courses per semester.

“We are pleased almost beyond words with this development,” said Dr. Rick Brewer, president of Louisiana College. “We are grateful for the cooperation of board president Keith Breazeale and all the board members, and for their unified vision of advancing the educational quality and content for local residents. Louisiana College is elated to be a part of that equation.”

Dual enrollment permits qualified high school juniors and seniors to enroll in college courses that, when successfully completed will apply to the students’ high school and college credit hours simultaneously.

Limited enrollment for high school sophomores may be available, but will require the high school principal’s recommendation.

Dual enrollment will be available to homeschooled students whose curricula meet Louisiana State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education requirements.

“The academic and economic benefits of our agreement are remarkable,” Brewer said. “Those benefitting the most from this include students who take advantage of dual enrollment, as well as their families,” Brewer said. “Not only will high school students be exposed to the rigors and relevance of world class instruction, the high school junior who successfully completes six hours of dual enrollment classes per semester could, upon approval, enter college with 24 credit hours.”

“That lacks only six hours of being college sophomore status,” Brewer added. “It also represents a financial savings of more than 90 percent on the freshman year. Essentially, the cost for completing the first year of college through dual enrollment is about \$800 instead of multiple thousands. In today’s economy, that is

See LC on 15

# LOUISIANA NOTABLES

## ON THE MOVE

- **Harold (wife Brooke) Brown** is the new pastor at First Baptist Church, Ringgold.
- **Aaron (wife Sharron) Dickinson** is the new pastor at Swartz First Baptist Church, Monroe.
- **Jordan Doyle** is the new pastor at Pine Grove Baptist Church, DeQuincy.
- **Larry (wife Sue) Anderson** is the new worship leader and music director at Ouachita Baptist Church, West Monroe.
- **Emily Funderberg** is new children’s director at Ellerbe Road Baptist Church, Shreveport.
- **Ralph Hines** has retired at Ferry Lake Baptist Church, Oil City.
- **Chris Willcutt** is new as pastor at Grawood Baptist Church, Keithville.
- **Tom Cole** is new as minister of music at Shreve City Baptist Church, Shreveport.
- **Hardy Yeats** is new as minister of music at Kingston Road Baptist Church, Shreveport.
- **Calep (wife Robin) Lewis** is new as senior adult/associate pastor at Trinity Heights Baptist Church, Shreveport.

## HOME COMING

- Hillcrest Baptist Church, Franklinton: **Church anniversary celebration**, July 19, 11 a.m. at the Education Building at the Washington Parish Fair Grounds. Attendees will meet in Education Building for a brief program and then proceed to the newly renovated Flower House for a pot luck meal/picnic. Pastor: Andrew Voss.
- Beech Springs Baptist Church, Quitman: **108th Homecoming**, July 26, 10 a.m. – noon. There will be dinner on the grounds following service. Speaker: Jim Lancaster. Special Music: Chad Tingle.
- Evergreen Baptist Church, Bernice: **125th Homecoming service**, July 26, 10:30 a.m. Morning service will begin with a concert consisting of Southern Gospel, Stamps Baxter-style and and four-part harmony ballads, up-tempo and heart-felt messages and performed by the **Pine Ridge Quartet of Tioga**. Worship will follow at 11:15 a.m. Speaker: **Jason Cole**, former pastor at Evergreen Baptist Church. Everyone is invited to stay and enjoy the noon covered dish meal that will be held in the Fellowship Hall. All former members, pastors and friends are invited to attend.

## REVIVAL

- Bethel Baptist Church, Franklinton: **Monday’s with the Master Revival**, July 20 and July 27, 6:30 p.m. Speakers: July 20 – **Fred Luter**,

July 27 – **Clark Stewart**. Fellowship will follow each service. Pastor: Joe Kelley.

## LAGNIAPPE

- Emmanuel Baptist Church in Arcadia is **seeking a bi-vocational pastor**. Please send résumés to Pastor Search Committee, 2042 Hwy 519, Arcadia, LA 71001 or email to emmanuelbc71001@yahoo.com
- First Baptist Church, Head of Island: **Blue Grass Gospel Singing**, July 18. 6 p.m. A fellowship will follow the singing. Worship: Shallow Creek. For more information, call Terry or Sharon Simoneaux at 225.698.6654. Pastor: Rocky Brown.
- Judson Baptist Church, Walker: **Church and Community Fiesta Picnic**, July 19, 4 p.m. There will be food, games, and piñatas. Also a table will be set up to collect toys and dollar donations for candy for Mexico. There will be water slides (kids bring your swim suits and towels). For more information call the church office at 225.665.5481. Pastor: David Lane.
- First Baptist Church, Bossier City: **What Now: What does the same-sex marriage decision mean to your church and religious freedom in America**, July 20, 7-8:30 p.m. Speaker: **Mike Johnson**, Louisiana State Representative and constitutional law attorney. He will discuss the five things every Louisiana church should do right now to protect against future challenges. Pastor: Brad Jurkovich.
- First Baptist Church, Jena: **Children’s Music Camp**, July 20-24, 10-11:30 a.m. for ages pre-K thru second grade; July 27-31, 10-11:30 a.m. for grades third through fifth. Cost: Free. Children will be introduced to basic music theory and learn to recognize the different groups of instruments (along with an elementary introduction to the keyboard). Enrollment is limited. Deadline to sign up is July 10. For more information or to sign up, call the church office at 318.992.4184. Pastor: Dominick C. DiCarlo Jr.
- **Outcry Tour 2015**, New Orleans at the Smoothie King Center, July 29, 7 p.m. Artists: Hillsong United, Kari Jobe, Bethel Music, Crowder, Lauren Daigle, Trip Lee, D.J. Promote. Speakers: Nick Hall & Shaun Groves. Cost: VIP -- \$99; Standing Pit -- \$49.50; Reserved 1 -- 49.50; Reserved 2 -- \$39.50; Reserved 3 -- \$29.50. For more information, call 504.587.3822.
- First Baptist Church, Lafayette: **The Hoppers in concert**, July 30, 7 p.m. Cost: \$10 general admission. Tickets are available at itickets.com; calling 800.965.9324 or by calling FBC church office during regular office hours at 337.233.1412. Pastor: Steve Horn.
- Mulberry Baptist Church, Houma: **Associational Mission Family Night**, July 31, 6 p.m. at the Bayou Baptist Association offices. Speakers: John and Marie Wiggins. Music: Sounds of Praise. Bring a covered dish for a meal afterwards. Pastor: Jim Meeks.

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## 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.

zh vevib nzm szgs ivxvrevw gsv trug, vevm hl

nrmrhgvi gsv hznv lmv gl zmlgsvi, zh tllw hgvdziwh lu

gsv nzmrulow tizxv lu tlw.

urihg kvgvi ulfi:gvm

**Clues:**  
T = G; L = O

**Answer to July 2, Scripture Crypto:**  
First Sammuel twenty-five:eleven

# 14 Classifieds

## Message Classified Ads

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Seeking a full time **PASTOR**  
Brazosport Baptist Temple in Angleton, Texas is seeking a full time pastor.  
Email résumé to [bbtchurch@sbcglobal.net](mailto:bbtchurch@sbcglobal.net) or mail résumé to  
Pastor Search Committee, Brazosport Baptist Temple  
1203 County Road 205 • Angleton, Texas 77515

**FULL TIME CHILDREN'S MINISTER**  
Great opportunity if you feel called to love kids, lead them to Christ and grow them up in Him.  
First Baptist Church,  
Attn: Chris Craig,  
200 South Trenton Street  
Ruston, LA 71270

**PASTOR NEEDED**  
First Baptist Church of Tool, Texas is prayerfully seeking an experienced, full-time Southern Baptist pastor.  
Send résumé to: Pastor Search Committee  
1001 N. Tool Drive • Tool, Texas 75143  
or email it to: [vicki@fbctool.com](mailto:vicki@fbctool.com)  
903.432.2711 [www.fbctool.com](http://www.fbctool.com)

**NEW HOPE BAPTIST CHURCH IN DEQUINCY, LA IS SEEKING A FULL OR PART-TIME MINISTER OF MUSIC**  
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Pastor, New Hope Baptist Church,  
543 Marcantel Rd,  
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or email your résumé to:  
[preacher@newhopedequincy.org](mailto:preacher@newhopedequincy.org)

**FULL TIME PASTOR**  
Fellowship Baptist Church in the Oak Grove Community, Converse, LA., is seeking a full time pastor.  
Please send résumés to Pastor Search Committee  
124 Fellowship Circle • Converse, LA 71419  
or email your résumés to  
[fellowshipbaptistchurch124@gmail.com](mailto:fellowshipbaptistchurch124@gmail.com)

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Send résumés to:  
University Baptist Church  
Attention: Ashley Barrios/Search Committee  
904 Menard Street, Thibodaux, La. 70301  
or email [ubc@ubethibodaux.net](mailto:ubc@ubethibodaux.net)

**SEEKING FULL TIME SOCIAL WORKERS**  
Louisiana Baptist Children's Homes is seeking full time social workers for the Alexandria and Baton Rouge areas.  
The ideal candidate must possess a MSW, have previous child-welfare experience, be an active member of a Southern Baptist Church, and be committed to serving God by ministering to children and families through foster care and adoption services.  
If interested, please submit a résumé to [beth@lbch.org](mailto:beth@lbch.org) or send to Louisiana Baptist Children's Home, P.O. Box 4196, Monroe, LA 71211.

**SEEKING A PART TIME ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT**  
Trinity Baptist Church in Hammond, LA., is seeking a part time administrative assistant.  
Please send résumés to Trinity Personnel Committee  
42062 Pumpkin Center Road • Hammond, LA 70403  
or email to [tbc@pumpkincenter.org](mailto:tbc@pumpkincenter.org)

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**Bivos** from page 2

The two-day conference also featured devotions by LC President Rick Brewer and coordinating countile member Darrell Fletcher, a national report by the coordinating council, meals, fellowship times, breakout sessions and music by the Blackwell Family.

**MICAH 6:8 PHILOSOPHY**

Before Brewer gave his devotion drawn from Micah 6:8, he invited the Blackwell Family, who opened up the meeting, to remain on stage and join him in an impromptu mini-songfest.

In his devotion, Brewer encouraged the pastors and wives to act justly, love mercy and walk humbly before God.

“If we could just simply do those things daily, what an impact we would have on the world around us,” Brewer said. “To act justly. You know what that means – do the right thing, be men and women of integrity, be a peacemaker. Do the things that bring about healing.”

Loving mercy means to be merciful, “to extend acts of kindness, random acts of kindness” and practice the “Golden Rule – to treat people even better than you would expect to be treated -- to leave places better than you found them.”

Brewer said he reminds students that no matter what believers do in service to others, “we extend the hand of love, Christ’s love” and are “taking with us the very presence of Christ in that purpose.”

Walking humbly with God includes having “a heart

full of God,” he said, “and to pursue God passionately in all that you do.”

Such humble passion means “there is no room for anti-intellectualism” in Christian higher education because believers are called to “love God with all our heart, soul, strength and mind.”

“There is no room for lazy-minded thinking,” he said. “We must be earning the right to be heard.” This requires the “right balance of scholarship and devotion.”

It also requires that Christian higher education be “relevant, relational and rigorous. Why? Because, we want our students to be able to compete in any marketplace in the world, and go to those places God is leading them and take the message everywhere. ... Wherever God is planting them, they are to be on mission with God in those places,” Brewer said. “And in that place, be a man or woman of influence.”

Brewer challenged the audience to live according to Micah 6:8, and to be sure that one’s personal passion is in line with God’s purpose.

Whenever Christians will submit to God’s call on their lives, Brewer said that God “will do amazing things in your life. He will make you flourish in ways you never imagined.”

During his national coordinator’s report, Ray Gilder said the organization finished with its best financial year ever. In 2014, the organization netted \$300,000, compared to \$15,000 the year before.

He added that during the organization’s annual lunch at the SBC Annual Meeting in Columbus, Ohio, 220 people



Joe Dupree photo

**Ray Gilder, national coordinator for the Bi-Vocational and Small Church Network, gives updates on what took place this year in the organization.**

attended, higher than average.

Other highlights included the location of its first national ministry center in Nashville, Tenn., having nine consultants across the country and producing numerous booklets to better help bi-vocational and small church pastors in their ministry.

“Our greatest need is consistent monthly contributions,” Gilder said. “We need churches to have \$50 to \$100 a month in their budgets. We also want to go to pioneer state conventions, be a blessing to those pastors who have no support and let them know they are not in this by themselves.”

Philip Caples, vice president of integration of faith and learning at LC and director of this year’s conference, noted the sacrifice the pastors made to attend the conference, which is a reflection of being a bi-vocational pastor.

“As I reflect back over the event, I believe that this conference was a tremendous success,” he said. “The conference offered quality training and encouragement for pastors who daily struggle with trying to balance family,

church work, and a secular job. Additionally, these pastors are the true Iron Men of the SBC and they are the champions on the front lines lifting up the cross of Jesus.”

For those attending the conference, the encouragement for pastors and their wives from both in state and outside Louisiana was much needed.

“It’s hard juggling ministry with basic family needs,” said Mark Joslin, a bi-vocational pastor at New Vision Church in St. Rose. “Without the support of my wife and encouragement from my church, discouragement would set in quickly and would make me feel like giving up.”

Tom Echols, pastor of Eagles Wing Baptist Church in Crowley, Texas, said his role as a bi-vocational pastor allows for unique ministry opportunities.

“I am not able to just pastor from the pulpit but am able to minister to customers on docks where I drive my truck,” Echols said. “This opens so many doors for me to share the gospel that I might not get to if I was not on the road a lot.”

**LC** from page 13

significant.”

LC will charge \$100 per class offered through dual enrollment.

“Qualified dual enrollment students who do not exhaust all eight semesters of TOPS eligibility while pursuing an undergraduate degree may apply the remaining TOPS eligibility toward a graduate degree,” said David Barnard, LC’s director of financial aid. “Therefore, taking dual enrollment classes in high school may actually be advantageous to the qualified students’ financial aid packages even in graduate school if they remain TOPS eligible,” he said.

Numerous additional advantages accrue for dual enrollment students, said Brewer, citing a Columbia University study that reports that students who participate in dual enrollment programs are more likely to go to college, perform better in college, and complete their college degree early or on time as compared to those who do not engage in dual enrollment.

High school students also get a “taste of the rigors of college academics,” Brewer said, which can help prepare the student for college curricula and help determine a student’s preferred career choice.

“Dual enrollment is only one piece of the academic pie we plan to serve across the state,” Brewer said. “Our vision to prepare graduates and transform lives through a relevant, relational and rigorous college experience has many aspects to it, and I believe the good people of Louisiana will continue to be pleased with our progress.”

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# Slab poured, work begins on Georgia Barnette Center

BY JOE DUPREE

Message Staff Writer

WOODWORTH – If you have been to Tall Timbers Conference Center in Woodworth recently, you may have noticed some construction going on in the middle of the campus.

What is being built between the main offices and the cafeteria is the \$1.255 million, 8,400-square-foot Georgia Barnette Mission Conference Center.

“The Georgia Barnette Conference Center will be a valuable asset to recapture missions as a primary goal of our work in reaching Louisiana for Christ,” said John Hebert, Missions and Ministry Director for the Louisiana Baptist Convention. “The building will contain an on-site office, coffee bar in a spacious foyer, an assembly area that will seat 280 (400 with wings expanded), and seven conference/

training breakout rooms.”

“We are very excited about getting this project going,” said Robert Woods, Louisiana Baptist Convention’s Mission Builder Strategist. “When it is finally finished, it will be a great building for Louisiana Baptists. It’s something we’ve been looking forward to starting and the groups who will be coming to help us build it.”

The pouring of the slab took place June 29 and framing of the building began July 13. Forty-five Kingdom Builders volunteers from Louisiana and Texas come to lend a helping hand July 13 on the building.

“You can’t imagine what a blessing these volunteers are to us. They will save us between 50 and 60 percent of our labor costs,” Woods said. “But this group will only be here a week and we are going to need more volunteers ... a lot more.”

“The main qualifications



Joe Dupree photo

The slab was poured June 29 for the new Georgia Barnette Conference Center at Tall Timbers on June 29. The next of four phases includes blocking, framework, putting up sheet rock as well as electrical and plumbing work. A call for volunteers is putting out to aid in the building of the center.

you have to have for this project are a willing heart and an ability to take off however long you want to volunteer, from just a few days to the entirety of the project. If you come, we will find something for you to do,” said Woods.

The first of four phases of construction will include framing it up, blocking it in, putting

up sheet rocking, and doing electrical and plumbing work throughout the building.

“We’ve got most of the money raised for the project,” said Bill Temple, on-site construction coordinator. “We’re hoping that once we get started, people will get even more excited; continue to donate money and volunteer to help with the

construction project.”

Due to limited housing, volunteers are asked to call Tall Timbers at 318.445.6797 so they can be placed in either nearby Camp Brewer and/or The Wesley Methodist Center in Woodworth.

The proposed finish date of the new conference center is March 2016.

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LC’s Business Division accreditation was reaffirmed for 10 years, and it received one of only 19 “STAR” awards given worldwide from the International Business Honor Society.

CPA exam: LC students own the 2nd highest pass rates in Louisiana while exceeding the national average.

With a 100 percent pass rate on several national standardized exams specific for educators, LC’s Education Department recently had TEAC accreditation extended for 7 years.

LC’s Nursing Department holds CCNE accreditation through 2023, and has a 93 percent first-time pass rate on the NCLEX.

The Physical Therapy Assistant Program at LC had a 93 percent first-time pass rate for the NPTE in 2014.

LC’s division of natural science successfully placed 20 of 23 applicants in medical school during the last three years.

English: PRAXIS scores exceed the state average.

*Fall 2015 enrollment is still open.*

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