

“God did not send his Son into the world to condemn it, but to save it.”

— John 3:17 (TLB)

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Church rides ‘wave’ of more baptisms

By BRIAN BLACKWELL
Message Staff Writer

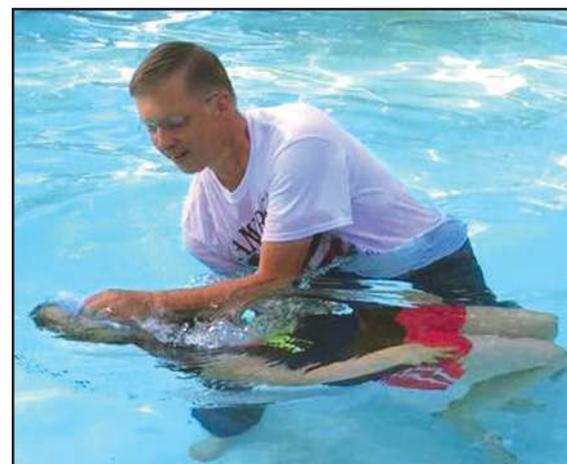
CHOUDRANT – Megan and Joshua Passon have spent many hours in a swimming pool on a hot summer evening, but on this particular night a dip in the water was extra special.

Standing in front of one another and dozens of friends, the husband and wife were baptized

along with 11 others from Longstraw Baptist Church. The 13 new believers, ranging in age from 7 to 72 years old were baptized in pairs Sunday evening of Memorial Day weekend.

Megan Passon said her baptism represented a public declaration of her faith in Christ, and added that being baptized with her husband was special because their marriage had been

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Pastor Larry Emory baptizes a member of Longstraw Baptist Church. Thirteen people were baptized during the poolside service.



Bill Bangham photo

Steve Gaines, pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in Cordova, Tenn., agrees to be president of the Southern Baptist Convention after initially offering to drop out after a controversy regarding the runoff vote. Gaines received more votes than the other candidate J.D. Greear, pastor of Summit Church in Durham, N.C., 49.96 percent to 47.80 percent. But he was not named the winner because of a parliamentary ruling which included 108 illegal ballots in calculating the percentages, keeping him from having a majority (more than 50 percent) of the ballots cast in the second round of voting. Greear ultimately conceded and moved that Gaines be elected by acclamation on the third vote during the 2016 SBC Annual Meeting, June 15 in St. Louis.

Presidential election, Confederate flag resolution among highlights at SBC

By DAVID ROACH
Baptist Press

ST. LOUIS (BP) – The election of Steve Gaines as president on the third ballot and a historic repudiation of the Confederate battle flag were among the highlights of the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting June 14-15 in St. Louis.

The convention’s resolution on the Confederate battle flag capped an emphasis on racial reconciliation throughout the meeting that included the election of a 2017 Com-

mittee on Nominations with 25 percent of its members drawn from ethnic minority groups and a panel discussion on “racial unity in America” featuring Jerry Young, president of the historically African American National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc.

The unofficial total of 7,321 registered messengers – up from 5,407 last year – on to praying for awakening in America, listened to a panel discussion on “pastors and the church in American politics

See **HIGHLIGHTS** on 5

From Africa to America, a man on a mission

By PHILIP TIMOTHY
Managing Editor



David Carlton, Evangelical Baptist Association's Director of Missions.

“In his heart a man plans his course, but the LORD determines his steps.” – Proverbs 16:9

LAFAYETTE – David Carlton never imagined he would leave the mission fields of Africa.

After all, it is where God had led him and it was where he and his wife Pamela had spent the bulk of their 26-years in ministry. And after 18 years of developing and nurturing meaningful relationships in South Africa, the couple was entering a fruitful season in their work.

But late in 2015, after much prayer, they

made the extremely hard decision to accept early retirement from the International Mission Board and to leave their work in South Africa.

“It was probably harder to leave than it was to go,” said Carlton. “We were experiencing more fulfillment in ministry than we had had in all the 18 years we had been overseas. So, yes it was a very hard decision to leave it all behind.”

Their decision was made even more difficult by the speed in which it all took place.

“One of the things I think that made it so difficult was it happened so quickly. You know we kind of got word this was going to be rolling out this way, and the decisions were

See **CARLTON** on 9

LC sports legend reaches youth others can't — through FCA

By WILL HALL
Message Editor

ALEXANDRIA — A small town girl from a dairy farm who ended up on the pages of Parade Magazine as an All-American athlete, Sheila Johnson has experienced an amazing life and now uses the platform of sports to reach out to youth for the glory of God. Johnson, a member of First Baptist Church in Pineville, is one of the founding members of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes in Central Louisiana, and sponsors an FCA chapter at Pineville Junior High School. “It was a just a coincidence” she said, that she ended up at PJHS. At that time she had just met with three other FCA supporters to decide to form an area-wide FCA program, when she “happened to get a call” from the PJHS principal, who

told her the physical education teacher was ill and the school needed someone to finish out the year in her place. “I never thought I’d go back to teaching — especially at the junior high level,” said Johnson, who as a player and then as a coach led the Louisiana College women’s basketball team to national final four appearances — in Division II of the Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (in women’s sports, the predecessor of the National Collegiate Athletic Association) and then in the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics, respectively. She also served as athletic director for the Wildcats, leading the effort to reestablish a football program after a hiatus of about 35 years. Johnson said she used the “coincidence” to ask to start an FCA chapter, and her request

was approved. “I only expected to be there a few months,” she explained. “But because of FCA I stayed.” She just completed her fifth year as a teacher and FCA sponsor at the school. “I accepted Christ at the age of 11,” Johnson said. “I wasn’t a gifted athlete, but I worked hard at it, and, I gave my life as a player to Christ.” “Basketball has always been a tool I wanted to use to glorify God,” she added. “FCA is an extension of that for me.” “It is a way we can minister to young people in our schools,” Johnson said. “And in some places, it’s the only way we can get into our schools. It’s a club. It’s voluntary.” At her school, the FCA is allowed to meet formally once a month and is open to the whole school, with 200 students coming sometimes. Johnson invites an area youth minister to offer a devotional and she has special music, too. Johnson said students come and hear the Word of Jesus Christ and what He can do for them.



Photo courtesy of Alexandria Town Talk

Sheila Thompson Johnson, the former Louisiana College All-American basketball standout, athletic director, 2006 LC Distinguished Alumni and the third person from LC to be inducted into the Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame, started and is nurturing a thriving Fellowship of Christian Athlete chapter at Pineville Junior High School.

“It can change their lives,” Johnson emphasized. “Christ changed my life.” Johnson said she senses a yearning among this age group — a search for “good.” “They’re searching for what’s missing in their lives,” she said. “They want peace. Kids come up to me and it al-

lows me to talk to them about Christ.”

She also described “an amazing sight” she sees almost every other day.

“The student committee decided to meet more than once a month,” she recalled. “They said, ‘Why don’t we meet on the patio for prayer?’”

Now on Tuesdays and Thursdays, there are up to 50 girls, holding hands, sharing a single Bible verse and praying, Johnson said.

“I’m no longer a player, coach or an athletic director,” Johnson offered. “But I was searching for how I could continue to serve God in athletics, and God filled that void in my life through FCA.”

“He’s opened doors to allow me to plant seeds of faith through sports.”

For information about the CENLA FCA, visit www.alexeca.org, and to learn more about the remarkable sports career of Sheila Johnson access <http://www.lacollege.edu/distinguished-alumni/2006>, and <http://www.lasportshall.com/inductees/basketball/sheila-thompson-johnson/?back=inductee>.

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NOBTS students & staff reach city with the Gospel

BY MARILYN STEWART
NOBTS Communications

NEW ORLEANS – When the team of 17 New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary (NOBTS) students and faculty members stepped into the neighborhood under storm-threatening skies April 21 to hand out 9-volt batteries, they did not know what the Lord would do.

Three members of the community near the seminary came to faith in Christ.

“The Lord gave us a window of one hour before the rain came down,” said Preston Nix, professor of evangelism and evangelistic preaching at NOBTS. “Two people... in two different locations had just finished praying to receive Christ when the rain started.”

Seven faculty members and 10 students formed teams to knock on doors and give away free batteries for home smoke alarms. The teams partnered with Gentilly Baptist Church (GBC) to show love to neighbors with the goal of sharing the gospel.



Seven faculty members and 10 students formed teams to knock on doors and give away free batteries for home smoke alarms.

Two weeks later, on May 5, seven students and seven faculty members went into the community. As a result of their witness one person came to faith in Christ.

“This involvement of our NOBTS faculty and students on the streets of our city shows once again that when we obey Christ’s Great Commission, the Lord has people ready to respond,” said Ken Taylor, professor of urban missions at NOBTS and GBC pastor. “As we increase our involvement in the neighborhoods of our city we will meet more of those ready

to accept the Good News of Jesus.” Michael Pogue, master’s student, said his team explained to neighbors that the batteries were a gift of love from Gentilly Baptist Church. After asking neighbors if they attended church, Pogue said he transitioned to the Gospel by saying that “more impor-



Students and faculty members enjoy a snowball after the “Safer Homes, Saved Souls,” servant evangelism event April 21.

tant than where you go to church is where you’ll spend eternity.”

“We are to share Jesus with the lost,” Pogue said. “And an act of love as simple as giving batteries to a stranger can soften their heart just enough to receive the gospel we share with them.”

Baton Rouge churches help inner city kids ‘go beyond’

BY BRIAN BLACKWELL
Message Staff Writer

BATON ROUGE – Churches from the Baptist Association of Greater Baton Rouge are trying to change the area’s inner-city youth, one summer camp at a time.

Held at Judson Baptist Retreat Center in St. Francisville, Camp Beyond gives middle and high school students a weekend of recreation and Bible study. Since the first camp was held in 2010, about

600 students have participated in an experience that Director of Missions Tommy Middleton says allows the youngsters to “go beyond” spiritual barriers in their lives to find God and follow His will for them.

“Crossroads” is the theme for this year’s camps.

“They are at a crossroads in their life and we are teaching them about making the right decisions,” Middleton said. “The inner city is all

See **BEYOND** on 8

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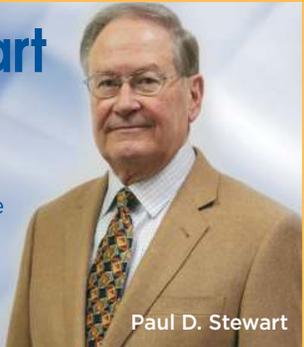
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Louisiana kids flock to FUGE camps at Mississippi College

By **ANDY KANENGISER**
MC News Bureau

CLINTON, Miss. – One hundred kids from Louisiana's Greenwell Springs Baptist Church were part of the first wave of FUGE campers building their faith at Mississippi College in early June.

Participating in lively worship services, playing fun games, and ministering to folks at Jackson area nursing homes were just a few of the life-changing projects visitors from the Bayou State experienced at the 2016 FUGE camp.

"The Holy Spirit was present here – you could feel it day and night," Elisa Bankston said. She was among 20 parent chaperones from the church near Baton Rouge returning to the Baptist-affiliated University.

"The staff did a great job. This is a well-run camp."

For a few hours, June 8, students and parents from Greenwell Springs Baptist temporarily left the Clinton campus to share the love of Jesus Christ to the elderly at nursing homes and to encourage foster children. They also delivered the Good News to families at apartments in Mississippi's capital city and did yard work in the hot sun and took on other tasks as a means to earn the opportunity to spread their message.

Coming to one of LifeWay's Fuge camps for the second straight summer at MC will reap long-term results, said Andrew Stafford, the Louisiana church's executive pastor. The FUGE camp,

he said, "will spark revival in the hearts of the students and that will be taken back to our area."

Camp made a difference to 8th graders Hanah Santanen, 12, and her friend, Madison Simoneaux, 13, both of Greenwell Springs. The girls believe experiences at America's second oldest Baptist college drew them closer to God. "I like the worship music," Madison said Wednesday inside air conditioned Nelson Hall.

"I like this campus."

Although the school cafeteria did not offer spicy Cajun cuisine, specialties like crawfish or even a staple meal of red beans and rice, the Louisiana visitors embraced their five-day stay. Sleeping in residence halls, singing contemporary Christian music at

worship in Swor Auditorium, and learning Bible lessons were among a marathon of activities they experienced.

Camp also led to fellowship opportunities.

Delegations from Antioch Baptist Church in Farmerville, First Baptist Church, LaPlace in New Orleans, and First Baptist Church, Baton Rouge were among 10 Louisiana churches that joined Greenwell Springs for FUGE.

Outside of Mississippi, Louisiana, Alabama and Arkansas send the most children from Baptist churches each year to MC camps, says Ken Gilliam, the Christian university's continuing education director who oversees the popular programs.

In June and July, more than 6,000 youngsters from 15 states invade the 5,152-stu-

dent MC campus for scores of church and sports camps.

With June temperatures climbing beyond 90-degrees, camp staffers worked hard to keep the 675 visitors cool. "We have crews on golf carts dropping off water coolers," Gilliam said. "We're making sure everyone is hydrated."

"Unashamed" is the theme of the 2016 FUGE camps.

"We are encouraging the students to embrace their faith," says camp pastor Justin Orr of Baltimore, Maryland. "Camp is impactful. It's not just Bible study," says the staff member at McLean Bible Church in Washington. The FUGE summer camp benefits lost and saved students, Justin explained. "It's neat to see them come to faith in Christ."

Church and sports camps

are a wonderful way to bring prospective students to the Clinton campus. Some like former FUGE summer camper Mary Beth Hughes of Denham Springs (she began coming to MC as a third grader) return as MC students.

The 20-year-old Hughes serves in a leadership role as the Student Government Association's chief justice at Mississippi College.

"I went to FUGE camps growing up and they were a big part in shaping my faith," says Mary Beth, an MC sports media major and a member of First Baptist Church, Denham Springs. "I learned so much and was surrounded by amazing people who invested in me spiritually."

"FUGE even led me to Mississippi College where I go to school now. I'm so

Senior adults enjoy Hilltop University at ETBU

By **MIKE MIDKIFF**
ETBU Public Relations

MARSHALL, Texas – It had been more than 20 years since Pastor Aaron Dickinson of Swartz First Baptist Church in Monroe had set foot back on the campus of East Texas Baptist University.

On June 1, Dickinson, who is in his first year as pastor at Swartz, returned to the campus June 1 and brought a group of senior adults from his church to attend ETBU's annual senior adult conference, Hilltop University, to enjoy three days of fun, fellowship, worship, preaching, and Biblical teaching

focused on revival and renewal.

Dickson said his group came to this particular conference because he was looking for a spiritual retreat experience for his senior adults that would be fun and inspiring.

"I knew about the Senior Adult Conference when I was a student here at ETBU," said Dickinson. "I looked the conference up online to see if they were still holding it because I wanted to find a regional event our senior adults could attend. We do not have a conference like this one in Louisiana."

Over 270 campers attended representing 56 difference churches – with 50 from Texas, four from Louisiana, and two from Arkansas. Brook Wood Baptist Church, Shreveport, First Baptist Church, Bossier, and First Baptist Church, Dubach, also attended from Louisiana.

Participants had a chance to experience a little bit of college life, staying in campus residential halls, eating in the Bennett Student Center and on the first night of the conference, enjoy-



Swartz First Baptist Church of Monroe pastor Aaron Dickinson (far left) brought church members to Hilltop University: A Senior Adult Conference held at East Texas Baptist University in Marshall, Texas, June 1-3.

ing ice cream while listening to 40's and 50's music in the "Soda Shoppe" created in the Huffman Student Activities area.

Chapel speakers for the event included: Robert Morris, founding pastor of Gateway Church in the Dallas/Ft. Worth Metroplex; D.L. Lowrie, a pastor, teacher, and author; his wife, Alice; and J. Blair Blackburn, the 13th president of ETBU.

Bible study sessions led

by Lowrie followed the theme "Walking By Faith in the Seniors Years," using 2 Corinthians 4:16-5:10 as his text. The longtime Bible teacher shared in one session, "God never gives you something that weighs more than His grace can get you through."

It was Helen Luft's first experience at the Texas conference and she had high praise for the experiences at ETBU.

"The food is great, and the accommodations are perfect," said the retired high school teacher and member of Swartz First Baptist for over 45 years. "I have enjoyed all the speakers and have been taking notes that I hope will help when I return home."

She also shared how she was reminded during the multiple activities that "faith in Jesus Christ gets us through what we have to get through."

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Highlights from page one

today” and addressed on multiple occasions whether Baptists should support Muslims’ right to build mosques in the United States.

When registered guests, exhibitors and others are included, the count of those at the annual meeting was tallied, as of June 15, at 11,581.

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

On the second ballot, neither Gaines, pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in Cordova, Tenn., nor North Carolina pastor J.D. Greear obtained a majority. Gaines received 49.96 percent, Greear 47.80 percent with 108 ballots ruled illegal but counted in calculating percentages of total votes cast, ruled to be 4,824.

Messengers would have had to choose for the second time among the same two presidential candidates for what chief parliamentarian Barry McCarty called the first time in SBC history, but Greear withdrew his candidacy and moved that the convention elect Gaines by acclamation. Recording secretary John Yeats said the presidential election has not gone to a third ballot in at least 20 years, the time that Yeats has served as recording secretary.

On the first ballot, Greear led with 44.97 percent of the vote of 5,784 votes cast. Louisiana pastor David Crosby, also a candidate, received 10.08 percent of that tally.

RACIAL RECONCILIATION

The Resolutions Committee originally proposed a resolution calling believers “to consider prayerfully whether to limit, or even more so, discontinue its display,” but also stating that for some the Confederate battle flag is not “a symbol of hatred, bigotry, and racism.”

But former SBC President James Merritt moved that the reference to the flag’s not being a racist symbol for some be removed and that the convention call believers to “discontinue the display of the Confederate battle flag as a sign of solidarity with the whole Body of Christ, including our African American brothers and sisters.”

Messengers adopted Merritt’s amendment and the resolution by wide margins after he told the convention support of the flag hinders

evangelism among African Americans and said, “Southern Baptists are not a people of any flag. We march under the banner of the cross of Jesus and the grace of God.”

During a nationally televised prayer service that night, Young, of the National Baptist Convention USA, said the wall of racism “is already down.” Hours before the resolution’s adoption, Young told Southern Baptists racism in America stems in part from the church’s failure to be salt and light. “Somebody needs to pass the salt and turn on the lights,” he said.

Young’s comments came during the racial unity panel discussion, which also included a multiethnic array of Southern Baptist leaders.

Outgoing SBC President Ronnie Floyd called racism “an assault on the Gospel of Jesus Christ” during his presidential address. He recognized the great great granddaughter of Dred Scott, the slave who was a party to the infamous Supreme Court decision bearing his name. “Any form of racism,” Floyd said, “defies the dignity of human life.”

PRAYER FOR AWAKENING

The Tuesday night “national call to prayer” featured two hours of prayer for awakening in America and around the world.

Brief addresses were delivered by a multid denominational team of leaders, including former SBC President Johnny Hunt, Sen. James Lankford of Oklahoma, California pastor and evangelist Greg Laurie and Young.

PASTORS, POLITICS AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

A Wednesday afternoon panel discussion considered the role of pastors and churches in American politics. The panel featured five pastors and written comments submitted by Liberty Counsel founder and chairman Mat Staver, who was unable to attend.

During the panel discussion, Jack Graham, pastor of Prestonwood Baptist Church in Plano, Texas, said the three most important issues in the 2016 U.S. presidential election are the sanctity of life, religious liberty and the appointment of Supreme Court justices. K. Marshall

Williams, pastor of Nazarene Baptist Church in Philadelphia, said believers should also consider “systemic racism and injustice” as well as “the pipeline from school to prison” among African American males.

A resolution adopted by messengers “encourage[d] Southern Baptists and all followers of Jesus Christ in the United States to participate in the democratic process by voting.”

On at least three occasions, messengers addressed Muslims’ right to build mosques in America.

A motion from the floor asked the convention to remove from their positions Southern Baptist “officers” and “officials” who support Muslims’ right to build mosques in America. A separate motion asked the SBC to withdraw its amicus brief in a federal lawsuit involving the Islamic Society of Basking Ridge (N.J.).

Both motions were ruled out of order, with the Committee on Order of Business noting the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission signed onto an amicus brief, not the SBC. The International Mission Board also signed the brief.

During the ERLC report, a messenger asked ERLC President Russell Moore how any Southern Baptist can defend the right to build mosques in light of the fact some Muslims are terrorists.

Moore responded that part of “what it means to be a Baptist is to support soul freedom for everyone.”

The Gospel, not government coercion, is the answer to Islam, he said.

MISSIONS AND EVANGELISM

Messengers adopted an Executive Committee resolution of appreciation for Wanda Lee, retiring executive director/treasurer of the Woman’s Missionary Union.

The resolution noted that during Lee’s 16-plus years of service, WMU has helped raise nearly a combined \$3 billion for the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions and the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for North American Missions – “which constitutes more than one-half of the total amount raised through these two offerings since they began being reported.”

IMB President David Platt reported that following a “difficult” reduction this year of 1,132 missionaries, “for

2017, we will be operating with a balanced budget with the stage set for a healthy financial future.” He thanked Southern Baptists for a record Lottie Moon Offering for 2015-16, \$165.8 million, the largest amount ever in the history of the offering, exceeding the previous high mark by almost \$12 million.

North American Mission Board President Kevin Ezell said NAMB planted 926 churches last year.

Among all NAMB church plants, one person is baptized annually for every 14 worshippers who attend on a weekly basis, according to NAMB data. In established churches, the ratio is one baptism per 19 weekly worshippers, according to the Annual Church Profile survey.

Crossover St. Louis, the convention’s evangelistic blitz preceding the annual meeting, yielded 556 professions of faith in Christ as Lord and Savior, the first increase in three years. SBC Annuals reveal starting in 2010, Crossover efforts have yielded 1,940, 1,131, 1,140, 582, 214, 345 salvation decisions, respectively.

In other news:

-- Messengers granted final approval for Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary to change its name to Gateway Seminary of the Southern Baptist Convention.

-- A scheduled panel discussion in which all entity heads would have fielded messenger questions together was canceled because the Executive Committee did not approve an SBC bylaw change to allow the panel format for entity questions. Instead, each entity president

fielded questions following his report.

-- Messengers made 22 motions, with 12 ruled out of order and 10 referred to entities or committees.

-- Twelve resolutions addressed topics including the June 12 terrorist attack in Orlando, Fla.; “biblical sexuality and the freedom of conscience”; requiring women to register for the military draft; and ministry to refugees.

-- Illinois pastor Doug Munton was elected first vice president without opposition. Missouri pastor Malachi O’Brien was elected second vice president from among two other nominees. Yeats was reelected to a 20th term as recording secretary, and Jim Wells was reelected registration secretary for a 15th term.

-- A Tuesday morning ceremony honored America and its veterans, with an appearance by one of the 2,000 remaining survivors of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941. A messenger’s motion requested that future SBC online registration forms ask messengers whether they have served in the military and that such service be indicated on messenger badges.

-- Chief parliamentarian McCarty was honored upon the 30th anniversary of his first service to the convention. A former minister in the Stone-Campbell tradition, McCarty joined a Southern Baptist church by baptism last summer and accepted a position on the faculty of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

-- All annual meeting attendees are asked to fill out a survey available at www.surveymonkey.com/r/16sbc.

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6 Louisiana Churches

Wave from page one

restored only several months before.

“Being baptized in the pool with everyone was really cool,” Passon said. “Everyone was gathered all around us and I believe I can speak for everyone when I say that you could feel so much love surrounding all of us.”

“Having a relationship with the Lord is now top priority in my life,” she continued. “I have found that even in the chaos of everyday life, there is now a sense of joy and peace that I have; that joy and peace came from my Lord and Savior.”

The service marked the highest number of baptisms for the church in a single day since Larry Emory became pastor in 2006.

Emory said a catalyst for the increase was the book “The Desperate Church” – which he became familiar with during the Louisiana Baptist Convention Evangelism Conference.

As he began reading the book written by LBC Evange-

lism Associate Keith Manuel, Emory said he realized his church could change and experience renewal, but only if members became desperate for God and completely surrendered to Him.

Emory recalled how Manuel said a church must choose “the right wave” to get on and ride all the way to the beach, and after prayer he sensed for Longstraw Baptist Church that wave was its children’s program.

Last summer, 68 children had attended the largest Vacation Bible School in church history, and the congregation decided to offer to pick up the youngsters by van for services.

By March of this year, drivers were picking up children on three routes for Wednesday evening activities, and the church started to search for an additional vehicle to accommodate the growth.

In April the church held a revival and many of those same kids brought their par-



Longstraw Baptist Church Youth Minister Connor Evans (far right) prepares to baptize a youngster during a special baptism service inside a pool. Pastor Larry Emory looks on, as he baptizes a youth as well.

ents to attend.

Emory said seeds planted in 2015 produced a harvest this year with 22 of the new folks becoming children of God, including three parents of the children who started attending Wednesday services.

Attendance across the board has increased, Emory said, with Sunday morning services expanding from 65 to 80 worshipers in a year, and turnout for Wednesday night activities more than doubling

from 30 to 65 participants during the same period.

Emory believes a second wave of baptisms will occur by the end of this summer, trusting God will again bless the church’s Vacation Bible School efforts.

Heather Council-Hyatt was thankful for the added investment Longstraw Baptist has made in the lives of children. Her nine-year-old daughter Mia was one of the new believers who were bap-

tized during the holiday pool ceremony.

“Watching Brother Larry dunk her in the water and then bring her back up took me back to the first time I ever laid eyes on her,” she said. “She was being born all over again. Mia loves going to church, and loves the Lord! She continues to amaze us on a daily basis.”

Emory said he’s going to continue riding the wave, as long as God allows.

“It’s been fun and all I’ve tried to do is stay out of God’s way,” he said. “I see what He’s doing and jump in there and work with Him.”

For churches that realize their need for revitalization, Manuel advises they follow Longstraw Baptist’s example and find the “wave” God has sent their way already.

“There are opportunities where the giftedness of a congregation intersect with needs in community,” Manuel said. “For Longstraw, this opportunity was in their weekly Children’s Ministry. They simply identified a wave of opportunity the Lord already

See WAVE on 8

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Louisiana Baptist leaders upbeat after Trump meeting

BY BRIAN BLACKWELL

Message Staff Writer

NEW YORK CITY – Donald Trump displayed a tremendous amount of humility while coming across as pro-life, pro-Israel and pro-traditional marriage during a meeting June 21 with more than 1,000 social conservatives, one Louisiana Baptist pastor who attended told the *Baptist Message*.

“He was the most humble I have seen him,” said Louisiana Baptist Convention President Gevan Spinney. “He was responding rather than reacting. When [former Gov.] Mike Huckabee led the discussion time with Trump, he seemed really humble just to be there.”

Spinney, who is pastor of First Baptist Church in Haughton, said Trump referenced attending Sunday school as a child, but that the presidential candidate did not come across as overtly religious.

“You try to look for things he said to give you hope he’s a believer but he didn’t give us any indication he was,” he said.

Spinney said Trump mentioned he potentially could name between three and five Supreme Court appointees as president and that Trump emphasized he leaned pro-life and emphasized religious freedom as a main concern of his.

“He said he was tired of Christians being attacked in courts,” Spinney said. “He made a statement that when he became president he was going to protect the rights of believers to be able to express themselves.”

Brad Jurkovich, pastor of First Baptist Church in Bossier City, said the room was full with an atmosphere of unity regarding issues they value – religious liberty, sanctity of human life and more.

He said Trump answered all questions posed to him and, when asked, stayed well beyond the scheduled 30 minutes allotted for his part of a day of discussions among conservative Christians. His appearance was just a portion of a slate of sessions that ran from 8:30 a.m. through 3:30 p.m. in New York City.

“Did he satisfy every concern?” Jurkovich asked and answered, “Probably not. But he was very willing to meet, in fact, met with several



James Dobson, a member of the newly formed Donald Trump Evangelical Executive Advisory Board, poses a question to the candidate at a New York June 21 event sponsored by United in Purpose and My Faith Votes.

key leaders for dialogue even prior to our main meeting.

“I was very encouraged and I believe many others were as well,” he continued. “The main thing is the fact that evangelicals have got to vote!”

Louisiana State Rep. Mike Johnson, a member of Jurkovich’s church, called the gathering of evangelical leaders a historic occasion.

“I think Mr. Trump did well before that audience and made a number of commitments that we wanted and needed to hear,” said Johnson, a candidate for the U.S. House of Representatives. “For example, he directly addressed his strong support for religious liberty, and the appointment of conservative and pro-life judges to the federal courts. I think he solidified the support of many who were still on the fence. As Mike Huckabee said, ‘This is not a pastor search committee. We are not hiring a pastor, but a president.’”

In all, Trump spoke for about an hour.

Among the hundreds of evangelicals who attended were newly elected Southern Baptist Convention President Steve Gaines as well as several past Southern Baptist Convention presidents such as Ronnie Floyd and Jack Graham. Other attendees included actor Kirk Cameron, Family Research Council President Tony Perkins, Samaritan’s Purse CEO Franklin Graham,

former Focus on the Family President James Dobson, evangelist Jay Strack and First Liberty Institute President Kelly Shackelford.

Though the meeting was closed to the media, participants took to social media to provide updates.

Bishop E.W. Jackson, pastor at Exodus Faith Ministries in Chesapeake, Va., posted videos on Twitter of a meeting Trump had with others earlier in the day.

“You can pray for your leaders, and I agree with that — pray for everyone,” Trump said in the clip. “But what you really have to do is you have to pray to get everybody out to vote for one specific person.

“And we can’t be, again, politically correct and say we pray for all of our leaders, because all of your leaders are selling Christianity down the tubes, selling evangelicals down the tubes,” Trump said, “and it’s a very, very bad thing that’s happening.”

A few people were chosen to ask Trump a question, including Floyd and Shackelford.

In a press release by First Liberty Institute, Shackelford said he asked Trump about potential appointments to the Supreme Court, as well as other judicial seats across the United States. He said he also raised the issue of religious liberty.

“I appreciated how, very early in the meeting, Mr.

Trump brought up First Liberty’s client, Coach Joe Kennedy, and expressed his concern that a high school football coach would be fired for praying after a game. Mr. Trump said attacks on faith like this need to stop and I agree,” he said. “During the conversation, I asked Mr. Trump to discuss his future judicial appointments and to explain what he would do to ensure that religious liberty is protected for people of faith, which includes people like Coach Kennedy. Mr. Trump noted that the courts will decide these types of cases and said he plans to release a list of four to five more judicial candidates he would consider appointing. I look forward to seeing his list and hope it will contain judicial nominees who would be devoted to protecting our constitutional right of religious liberty.”

“Although there is still more to learn about where Mr. Trump stands on some of the top religious freedom cases in America, like the Little Sisters of the Poor and military chaplains, I think today was a good start and I look forward to continuing the conversation,” said Shackelford. “I will do all I can to ensure that our next president, whoever it may be, will protect the rights of all Americans to practice their faith freely.”

United In Purpose cooperated with My Faith Votes to

organize many aspects of the meeting.

The My Faith Votes Facebook page described the purpose of the meeting as an opportunity to “facilitate a conversation to allow faith leaders to better understand Mr. Trump as a person, his position on important issues and his vision for America’s future, while also enabling him to better appreciate matters of importance to the faith community. In and through this meeting, we seek the presence and unity of the Holy Spirit. And so, we want to see this event covered in prayer.”

Other partners for the event included Americans United for Life, the Iowa Association of Regular Baptist Churches, CatholicVote.org., the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference, Liberty University, Regent University, Tea Party Express, The Frederick Douglas Foundation, Unity Coalition for Israel and the Kitchen Cabinet.

On June 21, Trump unveiled his Evangelical Executive Advisory Board, which has a strong Southern Baptist presence (*):

- Michele Bachmann, former congresswoman
- A.R. Bernard, pastor and CEO, Christian Cultural Center
- Mark Burns, pastor, Harvest Praise and Worship Center
- Tim Clinton, president, American Association of Christian Counselors
- Kenneth and Gloria Copeland, founders, Kenneth Copeland Ministries
- James Dobson, author, psychologist and My Family Talk host
- Jerry Falwell*, Jr., president, Liberty University
- Ronnie Floyd*, pastor, Cross Church
- Jentezen Franklin, pastor, Free Chapel
- Jack Graham*, pastor, Prestonwood Baptist Church
- Harry Jackson, pastor, Hope Christian Church
- Robert Jeffress*, pastor, First Baptist Church of Dallas
- David Jeremiah*, pastor, Shadow Mountain Community Church
- Richard Land*, president, Southern Evangelical Seminary
- James MacDonald, pastor, Harvest Bible Chapel
- Johnnie Moore, author, president of KAIROS Company
- Robert Morris, pastor, Gateway Church
- Tom Mullins, pastor, Christ Fellowship
- Ralph Reed, founder, Faith and Freedom Coalition
- James Robison, founder, Life OUTREACH International
- Tony Suarez, executive vice president, National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference
- Jay Strack*, president, Student Leadership University
- Paula White, pastor, New Destiny Christian Center
- Tom Winters, attorney, Winters and King
- Sealy Yates, attorney, Yates and Yates

Hard work brings spiritual harvest during spring break

By BRIAN BLACKWELL

Message Staff Writer

DEVILLE – Spring break for 70 youth and leaders from Philadelphia Baptist Church was more than just a recreational outing along the southeast Texas coast.

By the end of a week in Brownsville and Houston, the group saw 123 people come to know Christ, including five members of the evangelism team.

“No one worked harder than our youth and their leaders,” said youth minister Stuart Sasser. “When one person was working, all were working. As always we went to serve and make a difference in the lives of those whom we came to serve. But through it all, God may have impacted our group greater than the ones we actually came to serve.”

The youth worked in several teams on a number of mission projects, including: “stomp” and “trashcan drum-line” performances at 10 assemblies in six schools and three times at a Chick-fil-A restaurant; canvass-

ing more than 1,000 homes in 12 neighborhoods with the Gospel; and, conducting four block parties. They also painted a house and worked in two mission compounds, removing dirt, digging ditches, moving bricks and shoveling rocks from the back of dump trucks.

Throughout their time in Brownsville, the Louisiana group teamed up with evangelist Ken Freeman, and during one of the revival services, five youth from Philadelphia Baptist Church came forward to accept Christ.

“His amazing testimony and powerful preaching was a perfect fit for us that week,” Sasser said. “In my 22 years of youth ministry, I have never seen anyone better at speaking at school assemblies and then drawing them back to hear a clear Gospel

Beyond from page 3

message than Ken. “Ken also gave lots of encouragement as he spoke to me about what a special and rare youth group that our church is blessed with,” he continued. “In fact, he wishes he could take our youth on the road with him.”

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these kids have ever known, so we expose them to a rural setting in a loving and supportive environment.”

During its first five years of existence, the camp was offered for middle school students. Last year, a high school component was added. Seventy youth attended the middle school tract, June 23-26, and the high school camp is set for the final weekend of this month. Middleton is hoping they double last year’s high school attendance of 25 campers.

Associational leadership

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Submitted photo

The Philadelphia Baptist Church choir sings at Old River Baptist Church in Dayton, Texas. They spent a week in southeast Texas working on several mission projects and saw 123 people come to know Christ.

FIRST TRIP SINCE NEAR-FATAL CRASH IN 2015

The trip was the first the youth group has taken since June 2015 when 25 students and adult chaperones survived a serious bus accident in Florida

on the way to church camp. The 30-passenger bus left the roadway and hit a tree June 26.

Twenty-five riders on that bus were taken to four different area hospitals for treatment,

See **BREAK** on 9

is even considering adding a camp for second through fifth graders next year.

Cedric Murphy, pastor of Providence No. 1 Baptist Church in Ethel, has served as a camp counselor for three years. He can testify to the change he has seen in the life of his own church as a result of the camp.

“I’ve seen my family and some key leaders of our church grow as they are used by God during this camp as counselors,” Murphy said. “We have seen many kids accept Christ and many kids discover the love of God that helps them get through some tough living arrangements they’ve not been able to escape from.”

“Camp Beyond provides that retreat and escape they need to get saved, feel loved, learn manners and experience Christian mentorship and guidance,” he continued. “I see a fresh move of God at Camp Beyond every year. I thank Brother Tommy for his fresh

vision for our youth that lead me into this camp experience.”

While many of those serving as counselors are pastors and members of the association’s black churches, some are former campers, signifying fruit from seeds planted when they were just participants.

“This year our junior counselors stepped up and led the middle school camp,” Middleton said. “They got it. They were there to help those children to grow in their faith and know Christ. They weren’t there just to have fun with

them but to help them grow.

“We had kids on stage leading this year who were reluctant junior campers five years ago, and now they are leading,” he continued. “What we are doing is raising a generation of leaders through the camp. It’s not just recreation but re-creation.”

For more information, including how to financially sponsor a camper, contact the Baptist Association of Greater Baton Rouge, 225.296.3943.

Dip from page 6

sent their way and intentionally focused on reaching these children with the Gospel.”

Even though Longstraw Baptist has experienced tremendous growth in just a few months, the congregation knows God is just beginning a great movement at

the church that is celebrating a new life, Emory said.

“You hear people talking about it and see a lift in the spirits of people,” Emory said. “They are talking about it and reflecting back on it. It’s created a new vital spirit among the church itself.”

“I stress that we will go and give to world missions and state missions and national missions, but we live in a mission field,” he continued. “All you have to do is drive down a road, where in a three-mile radius there are 225 homes and most of those are unchurched people. We are living in a mission field. And we are reaching it one child, one person at a time.”

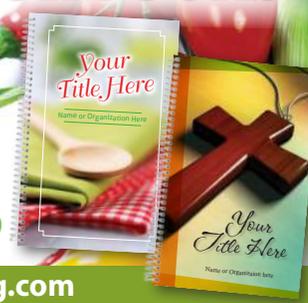
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Break from page 8

though none had life-threatening injuries. Just one of the youth involved in the accident was unable to return immediately, but she was able to travel only days later.

Another 40 members of the church party were in a second bus and a multi-passenger van.

"This was our first big trip since last summer. There were some that were experiencing a little anxiety getting on the road," Sasser said. "Praying for safety is something we never

want to take for granted. When you go through something like you did last summer, you pray for God's hand to be on you. The completion of this trip was a small victory and it was great to put last summer behind us."

A YEAR-ROUND SERVICE MENTALITY

Sasser said passion for service was engrained in the hearts of his youth even before their spring break trip.

During the year, they

commit themselves to service ministry teams, including choir, children's Bible study teaching, drama, media, drumline, stomp, worship bands, neighborhood evangelism and preaching. Sasser believes that students are not only the next generation of church leaders, but they are part of the church now and they should be given the chance to serve when they are teenagers.

He said that by the time teenagers graduate from the youth ministry at Philadelphia Baptist Church, they know the Gospel and how to share Jesus, they are nurtured to be sensitive

to the Holy Spirit, and they have learned how to disciple others.

"With the opportunity of these servant ministry groups, hopefully a teenager in our church can feel equipped and find a place to serve and experience being the working body of Christ," Sasser said. "The key to a great group of youth is having an amazing and organized leadership team. That is exactly what we have at Philadelphia. Everyone understood their own specific position on the team, and trusted each other to get the job done."

Noah Roberts enjoyed using

his servant ministry training to invite others to a block party and church service, which ultimately resulted in some of those who accepted to make decisions to follow Christ.

"The mission trip was a growing process for all of us serving on the trip and five of our own even accepted Christ," Roberts said. "The way the Lord moved on this trip was something like we have never seen. To say the least, our God is not dead, He is still moving and still saving people. I encourage everyone to be obedient to the Lord and what He has for your own life. Where is He leading you?"

The trip was life-changing for Sidnie Kendrick. Called to music ministry in the summer of 2014, Kendrick was able to use her musical gifts to lead worship at various locations.

"My favorite part was being able to look out at the congregation and seeing people worship," Kendrick said. "It's really cool to see the different ways people worship. Whether they have their hands up, singing at the top of their lungs, or they have their eyes closed, quietly praying to themselves, I love to watch the peace and emotion on their faces as we all worship our amazing God together."

Carlton from page one

going to have to be made pretty quickly."

The Carltons became two of the 983 missionaries and 149 stateside staff to leave the International Mission Board as a result of voluntary retirements and resignation programs. He did not stay in retirement for long.

On Feb. 22, 2016 the executive committee of the Evangeline Baptist Association unanimously voted him as Director of Missions.

"We feel so at home and welcomed to Acadiana," Carlton said. "This is just so unbelievable and humbling to us ... there has been just an outpouring of welcome, love and acceptance."

IMBEDDED IN THEIR LIVES

Carlton was first employed by the IMB in 1998 as Director of Theological Education by extension for the Tswana people group, a Bantu-speaking people living largely in South Africa and Botswana.

It was a position he would hold for seven years.

In 2005, he took on the task of strategy facilitator for one of two South African clusters where he worked to formulate strategies to reach the people groups of southeast South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland. He also was instrumental in providing strategy oversight to the missionary teams in the cluster.

He later served as an administrative associate for the Central, Eastern and Southern Africa region where he was responsible for administering and managing regional finances as well as personnel and logistics for the region. In 2009, he became director of logistics for Sub-Saharan Africa and two years later moved on to be the head of pastoral studies for the Baptist Theological College of Southern Africa for which he developed curricula

for the preaching academy. He also served as spiritual director, counselor and mentor to students.

He was just beginning a different phase of work when he and his wife took the early retirement option as part of the IMB's drawdown of veteran field missionaries.

"We were starting to get into the lives of some South Africans in the area of discipleship in helping them connect with God in a dynamic relationship, in a dynamic relationship many of them had never before experienced," he said.

"They had known a lot about God. They knew some things about Scripture, but they had never really encountered God in that kind of intimately personal relationship that we were privileged to accompany them on and lead them into, and that was just a phenomenal experience for us.

"You know Africans are extremely relational," he continued. "I mean it's all about the relationship to them."

Carlton said having to "quickly close down relation-

ships they had been building for years" was another aspect that made it so difficult to leave.

"Because our organization had had some previous experiences with reorganization and changing the way things were operating, it had impacted previous relationships. So, we felt we were rebuilding the trust with our national brothers and sisters -- to leave so quickly was very difficult for them, and it was very difficult for us too."

Carlton said the South Africans had "become intertwined

in their lives ... more so than the majority of their American relationships.

"The South Africans became more than just national partners in ministry. They were our family, they were our support group," he said. "We were very much embedded in the lives of our South African brothers and sisters. And they were in ours as well."

Carlton has so many stories to share.

Read the entire interview at www.baptistmessage.com

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LOUISIANA NOTABLES

ON THE MOVE

- Don Turner has resigned as pastor at New Horizon Church, Church Point.
- Randy Bowman is new pastor at New Horizon Church, Church Point.
- Christopher Jeffus is new pastor at Trinity Baptist Church, New Iberia.
- Clovis Sturdivant is interim pastor at New Chapel Hill, West Monroe.
- Dustin Stockstill is new pastor at Bedico Baptist Church, Ponchatoula.
- Dickie Nelson is new pastor at Westside Baptist Church, Ponchatoula.
- Jeffery Hodges licensed to the Gospel Ministry at Macedonia Baptist Church, Holden.
- John Campbell resigns as pastor of Holly Springs Baptist Church, Homer.
- Gerald Palmer resigns as pastor of West Lake Baptist Church, Doyline.
- Richard, wife Tricia, Price is new minister of counseling at Haynes Avenue Baptist Church, Shreveport.
- James, wife Hyuna, Franklin is new youth minister at First Baptist Church, Blanchard.
- Don Francis is new associate pastor at Eastwood Baptist Church, Haughton.
- Matt Powers is new music minister at Northwoods Baptist Church, Shreveport.

IN REMEMBRANCE

■ William Hoten "Buck" Curry lost a long battle with cancer June 5. Services were held at Warsaw Baptist Church in Delhi. He surrendered his life to the Lord in 1985 which yielded a strong devotion in him to serve his Savior in ministry to several church families. He found his calling pastoring at Patton Baptist Church, Jonesville, Robinson Baptist Church, Dunn, Pioneer Baptist Church, Pioneer, Harmony Baptist Church, Delhi, Parkview Baptist Church, Tallulah, and was the current pastor of Waverly Baptist Church, Waverly. Curry also served on the Madison Parish Police Jury for nine and a half years and was a retired farmer by vocation. He came out of retirement to work for Southern Produce Distributors, then later, Poverty Point State Park where he was employed upon his passing. Curry is preceded in death by his parents, William Hoten Curry Sr. and Eula Lowery Curry; three siblings Ellis Hatten, Irma Lee Hoggatt and Violet Hill and a great granddaughter Aubrie Grace Yates. He is survived by his wife of 44 years, Beverly Bryan Curry of Delhi; two daughters Tammy McCalmon and husband Shane of Epps, and Suzy McDaniel and husband Mark of Oak

Grove; five grandchildren John Taylor Yates and wife Maggie, Jakob Yates, Breland Yates, Dylan Johnston and Alyssa Bass and two great grandchildren Bentley Alford and Jaxton Yates. He is also survived by five brothers and sisters, David Hatten and wife Beverley and Leann Holloway all of Delhi, William H. Curry of Alabama and Leo Hatten and Jessie Johnson both of Texas and by numerous nieces and nephews.

■ **James "Mike" R. Overcash, Jr.**, 80, of Brentwood, Tenn. Born Oct. 10, 1935, he went home to be with his Lord on June 8, 2016. Survived by his wife of 52 years, Jean; daughter, Kim Stanford (Steve); son, Michael Overcash (Christy); step-grandsons, Derek and Justin Bush; and sister, Sylvia Timmons. He was a graduate of Wake Forest University and the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. He served his country actively in the U.S. Army and reserves for more than 40 years, was a veteran of the Vietnam War, and retired from the Army as a Lieutenant Colonel. Before moving to Brentwood, TN, in 1978 to take a position with Brentwood Baptist Church, he served as music minister at Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church in Bogalusa. He worked for LifeWay Christian Resources, helped several Tennessee Baptist churches as their minister of music, worked for the TBC from 1995-2001, and served as interim director of Tennessee Baptist Disaster Relief in 2015. His disaster relief volunteer work continued through Judson Baptist Church, Nashville, where he was a member.

■ **Perry Webb, Jr.**, 91, of Natchitoches, passed away May 14. Services were held May 21 at First Baptist, Natchitoches. Webb served as a Baptist minister for 74 years. He began his pastoral ministry as a seminary student, serving a country church in East Central Illinois. Webb went on to pastor First Baptist, Poteet, Texas (1949-1952); First Baptist Church, Natchitoches (1952-1964); First Baptist Church, Albany, Georgia (1964-1975); and First Baptist Church, Baton Rouge (1975-1988). He served on the Louisiana Baptist Executive Board as secretary, vice chairman and president. He was President of the Louisiana Baptist Convention for two years. He loved the student activities at Northwestern State University, leading in the building of the first off-campus facilities of the Baptist Student Union, and serving as chairman of the BSU committee of NSU and State Pastor Advisor of the Baptist Student Union. He served as a Louisiana College Trustee. In 2015 he was honored with the recognition as Pastor Emeritus to the First Baptist Church of Natchitoches. He was preceded in death by his parents. He is survived by his wife of 66 years, Virginia Powell Webb; daughter, Deborah Webb Smith; son, Perry Flynt Webb, III and his wife, Kim; grandsons, Walker Smith, Phillip Smith and his wife, Amy, Jonathan and Tyler Webb; sister, Rebekah Webb Richards; as well as many nieces and nephews.

HOMECOMING

- Gray's Creek Baptist Church, Denham Springs held its 69th Homecoming on June 26. Evangelist: Charles "Andy" Rushing Sr. who was licensed to the Gospel ministry at Gray's Creek and a 1965 graduate of Denham Springs, celebrated the church's homecoming and his 45 years in ministry.
- His Church, Pineville: 10th Homecoming service, July 3, 8 a.m. (Southern Gospel Celebration), 9:30 a.m. (Contemporary Celebration), 11 a.m. (Contemporary Celebration). There will be a fellowship lunch at 12:30 at the Ball Community Center. Pastor: Steve Speer.
- Ridgecrest Baptist Church, Ridgecrest: 60th Homecoming Celebration, July 10, 10 a.m. Speaker: Luther Carlisle (first pastor of Ridgecrest Baptist). Lunch will follow services. All former pastor, members, music ministers and friends are invited to join in the celebration. Music will be provided by Jeffery Goodman and the Ridgecrest Choir. Pastor: Dennis Baker.
- Salem Baptist Church, Plain Dealing: 172nd Homecoming, July 10, 11 a.m. Speaker: Sam Marino (former pastor 2002-2008). Lunch will follow the service at noon and singing will begin at 1:15 p.m. Pastor: Larry Earhart.

REVIVAL

- First Baptist Church, Minden: Revive (summer revival series), July 10, 17, 24 & 31. July 10, 6 p.m. Speaker: Will Simmons. Music: Jeff & Jake Cowley. Fellowship following service features Red, White and Blue desserts; 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.
- First Baptist Church, Converse: Revival, July 10-13, Special Guests: The Gary Willis Family. Pastor: Ron Almeida.
- Aimwell Baptist Church, Zwolle: Revival, July 13-17, Speaker: Bill Robertson. Pastor: Ronnie Sandifer.
- First Baptist Church, Zwolle: Revival, July 13-17, Speaker: Spencer Lovitt. Pastor: Jerry Penfield.

LAGNIAPPE

- A Louisiana Southern Baptist Church is in need of a used 15-passenger van. If anyone has one for sale, please call 318.623.4319.
- Wayne Dunn is available for pulpit supply and interim work. To contact him, please call 318.733.0248 or email browaynedunn@yahoo.com.
- Cheniere Baptist Church, West Monroe is seeking part-time

music minister. Interested applicants can send their resumé to Bobby Moffett at 201 Cheniere Church Rd., West Monroe, LA 71292 or email chenierebapt@yahoo.com. For more information call 318.396.2275 between the hours of 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. Monday through Friday.

- Larry Baldrige is available for supply, interim, pastorate and revivals. References can be supplied upon request. Call 337.250.3954.
- First Baptist Church, Jonesboro: Appreciation Day for Military Veterans & First Responders along with their families, July 3, 10 a.m. The FBC Adult Choir will present a cantata of patriotic music directed by minister of music Russ Givens, and there will be a special message by veteran and Deputy Sheriff Clovis Sturdivant. Following the program, there will be a special luncheon honoring all those who have served and are still serving our community, state and nation. Pastor: Charles Wesley.
- First Baptist Church, Slidell: Independence Day Celebration, July 3, 4 to 7 p.m. There will be plenty of food, fun, music, and time to fellowship. Pastor: Ricky Cummings.
- Bethel Baptist Church, Colfax: Patriotic Celebration & Fellowship, July 3, 5 p.m. Church-wide Fish Fry and Southern Gospel Concert with Brad Mount in the Family Life Center. Following the concert at dark, there will be fireworks. Pastor: Carl Gulde.
- First Baptist Church, Baton Rouge: Festival of Freedom, A Celebration of God and Country, July 4, 6 p.m. Featuring the combined choir and orchestra from Baton Rouge area churches. Pastor: Oren Conner.
- Alto Baptist Church, Alto: Celebrate God & Country Day, July 3, 10:30 a.m. Speaker: Ralph Abraham. Music: Brothers in Christ, a southern Gospel group from West Monroe. All veterans will be honored. A barbeque dinner will be served following the service and the community is invited to attend. Pastor: Alan Miller.
- North Shreve Baptist Church, Shreveport: Special Patriotic Concert, July 3, 6 p.m. Music: Mark Lanier. Pastor: Roy Davis.
- First Baptist Church, Bogalusa: Freedom Sunday, July 3, 10:30 a.m. Dinner will follow the service. Pastor: Greg Whaley.
- First Baptist Church, Slidell: Independence Day Celebration, July 3, 4-7 p.m. Bring a side dish or dessert and lawn chairs. The church will provide hamburgers, hot dogs, drinks and watermelon. Pastor: Ricky Cummings.
- First Baptist Church, Haynesville: Fourth of July Celebration, July 3. Those attending will get to enjoy hamburgers and fixings, homemade ice cream, cookie, dominoes, cards, swimming, and volleyball.
- Baptist Association of Greater Baton Rouge/LSU BCM: '1st Annual or Maybe Never Again' Golf Outing for pastors/staff/church family, July 15, Cooper Mill Golf Course in Zachary. Cost: \$40 per person (cost includes golf, golf cart & lunch). RSVP: BAGBR 225.296.3943 or email baptistassociation@bagbr.org.

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Each month in 2016 the Louisiana Baptist Foundation will award a gift to a Louisiana Baptist Church or Ministry.

Help choose the recipient by completing the form below and returning to the address listed. If your submission is selected (at random), \$1000.00 will be sent to the ministry you have chosen.

The Louisiana Baptist Children's Home was the ministry selected for May in support of their broad base of family oriented ministries. The person making the selection chose to remain anonymous.

Mail completed form to:
GIVE A GIFT
c/o Louisiana Baptist Foundation
P.O. Box 311
Alexandria, LA 71309

Name _____

Phone _____

eMail _____

Church or Ministry Selected:

For information, rules and a link to on-line submission, go to: www.baptistmessage.com/give-a-gift/

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.

pbg sjgdcr, aujh aj ajgj admu rbz, aj mbcq rbz

ejpbgj mukm aj yubzsq yzppjg mgdezckmdbh;

jsjh ky dm wktj mb xkyy, khq rj ohba.

Pdgym mujyykcbhdkhy mugjj:pbzg

Clues:
Y = S; K = A

Answer to June 9 Scripture Crypto:
Isaiah fifty-nine:one

First West Monroe member makes Carnegie Hall debut

By STAFF

Baptist Message

NEW YORK – For his entire life, Greg Oden dreamed of directing a choir at Carnegie Hall.

He finally got his chance in late May, when Oden and 82 students from the West Monroe High School Rebel Choir performed a 30-minute performance that featured several Christian-themed songs before a crowd of about 2,000.

“It took me 52 years to make my Carnegie Hall debut,” said Oden, a member of First West. “It’s just a revered place. I tell

all the kids who have been there, that all these great, great performers have come before us. It’s one of those places walking onto the stage that is inspiring.”

Five of the six songs the choir sang had Christian themes. These included “Elijah Rock,” “Lamentations of Jeremiah” and “At the Round Earth’s Imagined Corners.”

This was the school’s fifth time for the choir to perform at Carnegie Hall, but the first time not to be combined with other choirs, and, the first time Oden was able to direct the

group. Other locations where they have performed include 9-11 Memorial in New York, Omaha beach in Normandy, and Papal Basilica of St. Peter in the Vatican.

Oden, a member of the First West orchestra, will continue his travels, this time overseas, when he goes to Europe this month with singers and musicians from his church.

They flew to Wales June 25 to sing at schools, churches and other locations.

“I was raised that if God gave you a talent, you give



Greg Oden is all smiles as he stands in the doorway of his Carnegie Hall dressing room during West Monroe High School’s trip to the legendary venue.

it back to the church because He gave it to you in the first place,” Oden said. “When I leave this earth, I want every-

one to realize I did the best I could to make the music for the kids in the schools and church the best it could be.”

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LouisianaBaptists.org/ReGroup
August 13 at Summer Grove, Shreveport

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LouisianaBaptists.org/Connected
August 26-27 at Tall Timbers, Woodworth

**PRETEEN
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PreTeen Invasion
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August 20 at Temple, Ruston
August 27 at First, Lafayette

For more info call 318.448.3402 or 800.622.6549.