

“Jesus answered them, This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent”

— John 6:29
(ESV)

MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST Message

Newsjournal for Louisiana Baptists



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September 10, 2015

Platt: IMB reducing workforce by 600-800, overspent \$210 million since 2010

By WILL HALL
Message Editor

ALEXANDRIA — David Platt, president of the Southern Baptist Convention's International Mission Board, shared that the overseas missions group had overspent its budget by \$210 million since 2010, including \$39 million in 2014, alone, dropping operating reserves to 4 months of funding, below the minimum 6 months amount advised by the SBC Executive Committee.

Consequently, he said, the IMB plans to reduce its workforce — field missionaries and staff — by 600-800 people.

PRESENT REALITIES

During a conference call with reporters August 27 Platt laid out the situation in terms of a crisis of IMB's own making.

“The challenge we're addressing is that despite increased giving to the IMB over the last four years, for example, we have consistently spent more money than has been given to us each year,” Platt explained.

“What we realized,” he said, “is as we got into the budgeting process this year —



IMB President David Platt addressed the packed crowd at Spotswood Baptist Church of Fredericksburg, Va., Aug. 26 in which 42 missionaries were appointed in a service.

See IMB on 15

DOWN BY THE RIVER

First West celebrates baptism of 31 members in Ouachita

By BRIAN BLACKWELL
Message Staff Writer

WEST MONROE — A few hundred members of First West recently celebrated the baptism of 31 fellow members down by the riverside.

One of two river baptisms the church holds each year, First West held River Fest on a mid-August afternoon that resembled a true celebration by the Ouachita River. Nearly 600 people were present to witness the baptisms and take part in games, music, inflatables for the kids and a catered catfish supper.

“There was a lot of energy, as people were super excited to get baptized,” said Christopher Trombatore, student pastor at First West.

“We had people from every age range and socioeconomic class. It was just a really neat day for our church and the people who were baptized.”

For Trombatore, River Fest was extra special. The last person he baptized was Caleb Adams, a member of the youth group when Trombatore was student minister at Tom Hebert Road Baptist Church in Lake Charles. Now an intern for the student ministry at First West, Adams believed he

First West has recorded 158 baptisms this year and they are on pace to baptize 175 people before the end of 2015.



First West photo

Dane Massey baptizes his daughter, Chloe, during First West's River Fest in mid-August. Celebrating with the Masseys are First West Fairbanks Pastor Chad Merrell and First West Family Pastor Terry Young.

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First Haughton's Spinney to be nominated for LBC President

BY PHILIP TIMOTHY
Managing Editor

Gevan Spinney's name will be placed in nomination for the position of president of the Louisiana Baptist Convention during this year's LBC Annual Meeting, according to a press release distributed by Waylon Bailey, pastor of First Baptist Covington and former Louisiana Baptist Convention president.

Spinney is the senior pastor of First Baptist Church in Haughton.

The LBC Annual Meeting is scheduled to meet Nov. 9-10 at First Baptist Church in Bossier City.

According to the release, Spinney is "a young man who loves Jesus and has a passionate heart for the lost while not compromising his conservative theology. He has served in almost every imaginable position in his association and in the state convention."

Since becoming the pastor of First Haughton in 2003, he has overseen the church's explosive expansion.

Under his leadership, First Haughton's attendance has grown from 300 to 900 and the church has recently moved into a new \$7 million children's facility and worship center that seats 1200. In the last two years, the church has baptized 246, an average of 123 annually.

Additionally, the church's



First Baptist Haughton
Pastor Gevan Spinney

budget has more than doubled through his stewardship and First Haughton gives 11 percent of their undesignated receipts to the Cooperative Program.

"God's hand is truly on his life and ministry," states the release.

Spinney was licensed by the church he currently pastors in 1992 and ordained by First Haughton in 1995. His ministry involves four years as a youth pastor at Red River Baptist Church in Benton and from 1999-2002 he was the associate pastor and youth pastor at Rose Park Baptist Church in Shreveport.

In 2002, Spinney became the youth pastor at First Haughton and was so well

respected by his home church that they felt led to call him as their next pastor when the position became available a couple of years later.

"If God so leads, it is believed that Gevan Spinney could be used by God to lead our Louisiana Baptist Convention at this time to new heights of mission work, CP giving and a unified strong spirit which seems to be characteristics of his ministry," the press release states.

Spinney is married to Andrea L. Spinney and they have three children Jeb (12), Jake (10) and Jude (4). He is a graduate of Haughton High School and earned his B.S. Degree from East Texas Baptist University in Marshall, Texas in 1998. Later, Spinney earned his M.Div. in 2005 and his D. Min. in 2015 from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

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Johnson offers pro-bono legal defense to LSU's chaplaincy program

BY BRIAN BLACKWELL
Message Staff Writer

BATON ROUGE – In the wake of the Freedom From Religion Foundation's claims that the chaplaincy program at Louisiana State University is unconstitutional, Mike Johnson, chief counsel of Freedom Guard, has offered to defend the school pro-bono.

Officials from FFRF released a report on Aug. 17 entitled "Pray To Play: Christian coaches and chaplains are converting football fields into mission fields."

In the 25-page report, which was followed by a letter sent to LSU and other schools including several in the Southeastern Conference, the organization that focuses on separation of church and state said public universities and their employees are forbidden from endorsing, promoting or favoring religion.

Schools that have received legal letters telling them to get rid of their chaplaincy are Auburn University, University of Georgia, University of South Carolina, Mississippi State University, University of Alabama, University of Tennessee, Louisiana State University, University of Missouri, University of Washington, Georgia Institute of Technology, University of Illinois, Florida State University, University of Mississippi, University of Wisconsin, and Clemson University.

"Yet, many football coaches at public universities bring in chaplains – often from their own church or even members of their own family—to prey on and pray with students, with no regard for the rights of those students or the Constitution," the report said. "These coaches are converting playing fields into mission fields and public universities are doing nothing to halt this breach of trust. They are failing their student athletes. The purpose of this report is to expose this unconstitutional system, encourage universities to fix it, and stimulate further efforts to protect students' rights of conscience."

In response, Johnson, who is a state representative and member of First Baptist Church in Bossier City, joined with the Alliance

Defending Freedom to send a legal information letter to LSU officials, encouraging them to stand their ground and defend the tradition of allowing chaplains to serve their

sports teams.

Johnson said that no court has ever said public universities cannot utilize

chaplains for their teams. He said that he is ready to defend LSU if FFRF brings forth a challenge.

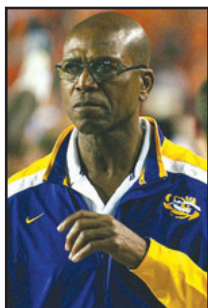
"We are offering to defend my alma mater free of charge if LSU stands by its tradition of allowing team chaplains and receives even a hint of any legal challenge as a result," Johnson said in a news release. "Our student athletes should not have to surrender their fundamental right to the free exercise of religion, especially since so many of them are on the road frequently, on Sundays and other designated times

for worship, and often working under stressful conditions. We cherish religious freedom in this state, and we surrender it to no one."

"We've been defeating these radical leftist groups in the federal courts of Louisiana for almost two decades, and we'll do it again this time if they bring a challenge," he continued. "Their

search-and-destroy mission to take out every remaining symbol of America's deep religious heritage will be stopped in Death Valley. Mark my words on that."

Johnson says the fight to keep chaplains involved in sports is a battle that no school, university or community should give up on so easily.



LSU Football Chaplain
Ken Ellis



State Representative
Mike Johnson

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Ashley Madison: “It’s a different kind of Katrina”

Editor’s Note: “Life is short. Have an affair.” That motto of the online adultery firm calling itself Ashley Madison has supposedly lured in nearly 40 million participants.

The website promises “100 percent security.” It promises that registrants who pay the fee “will find someone within 3 months or we’ll refund your money.”

Recently, hackers broke past the security wall and released the entire list. No one knows whether all the names are legitimate.

We are learning that quite a few well-known political and religious leaders signed on to this amazingly bone-headed come-on.

Many are running for cover. Others are into denial, some have gone public with their confession and repentance, and we have heard rumors of suicides as a result of this scandalous list.

As a young minister, I said to a saintly older woman in the church, “You are the godliest person I know.” She said, “Oh, honey, if you just knew.”

I’m the age of Marguerite Briscoe then. I know now what she knew then. There is none righteous, no, not one.

We are all fallen creatures redeemed by the blood of the Lamb and in daily need of His grace and mercy.

OH NO...

I got caught up in the Ashley Madison scandal and did something really horrendous for which I need to confess and apologize:

I became prideful because my name is not on that notorious list.

Those who have been ‘outed’ are worse sinners than me, I thought. My prayers became disturbingly similar to the boastful confession of the Pharisee in Luke 18:11 – “God, I thank you that I am not as other men...”

And I was wrong. So embarrassingly wrong.

I AM AS OTHER MEN. AND SO ARE YOU



JOE MCKEEVER
Retired Pastor,
Author
New Orleans

No one who signed up with the scandalous Ashley Madison offer is different in nature from me.

If that was you, if you were among that number, please read on.

“If you, Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?” (Psalm 130:3). A decade ago, we in the path of Katrina would cite this verse in answer to those announcing that hurricanes and floods are Heaven’s judgments on our city.

All have sinned. As someone has said, “Every saint has a past; every sinner has a future.”

It’s been called “The Christian’s dirty little secret,” that even the best of us experience the same passions, problems, and temptations as the rest of the world.

Christians of all people should know better than to put people – particularly one another – on a pedestal of holiness where they are impervious to temptation and sin. But we do that.

Friends of mine moved across the street from the Adrian Rogers family some years back.

One night, while husband Bob was standing in front of the living room window, he called to his wife, “Honey, come quick! Dr. Rogers is taking his

garbage out to the curb!” Wanda calmly replied from the other room, “Well, how did you suppose it got there?” “I don’t know,” he said. “But I just never imagined him taking his own garbage out.”

That’s how it works. Surely the great preachers and wonderful Bible teachers among us are removed from the mundane tasks of daily living the rest of us struggle with. Certainly, their thoughts are always pure and their motives above suspect.

Just so easily do we fool ourselves and lay a trap for our leaders. We excuse our foibles while expecting them to be sinless.

It turns out they are much like the rest of us. And that is a lesson well worth learning, no matter who we are or at what stage of spiritual development.

“No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man...” (I Corinthians 10:13).

After all, *“He Himself knows our frame; He is mindful that we are but dust” (Psalm 103:14).*

The Lord is under no illusion about any of us. He knows we are made of humble stuff. When we sin, the only one surprised is us.

The Ashley Madison mess forces the Lord’s people once again to reaffirm our understanding of human nature – “It is not in man who walks to direct His own steps!” – and our commitment to the gospel of Jesus Christ: “He alone is Savior.”

On the one hand, the church holds up holiness in conduct as the standard for all believers. Meanwhile, the other hand holds out forgiveness and reconciliation for all who repent and confess.

Some call this “law and grace.” Nowhere do we see the interplay of the two better than in Exodus 20 where

God gives Israel His 10 Commandments.

Then, in the same chapter, He says, *“An altar of earth you shall make for me... (to) sacrifice on it....” (20:24).*

On the one hand, His standard is righteous. And on the other hand, his forgiveness is always available. What a wonderful Lord we serve!

Humility and holiness are the twin headlights of God’s congregations, both shining into the darkness to keep us in the road.

Christians who are spiritually misaligned will veer from one to the other, sometimes enthroning legalism (“Be ye perfect!”) and at other times approving what God has forbidden (immorality, deceit, greed).

PRONE TO WANDER, LORD, I FEEL IT...

If your name is not on the Ashley Madison list . . . and if you have been kept pure from the sin of adultery . . . or if you have successfully escaped other such snares of the flesh . . . then thank God that His restraining grace has kept you from falling into that particular pit.

For you know in the deepest recesses of your being that your heart too is prone to wander.

And if your name is on the list and you now find your life coming apart at the seams, then turn to Jesus. Turn to Him. Fall on Him. Cling to Him with all that you are. For no pit is so dark that He cannot see nor so deep that He cannot reach.

The truth is that whether you are an adulterer or a moral paradigm, Jesus is your only hope. To Him do we run, and in Him do we live. In Christ alone we stand.

Aided by the wise counsel and timely suggestions of my pastor and friend Mike Miller of FBC Kenner.

How to deal with aftermath of Ashley Madison reveal

The Ashley Madison website was launched in 2001 as a matchmaking site for married people seeking to have affairs. The site’s slogan was “Life is short. Have an affair.”

In July, hackers stole the personal data of more than 30 million of the site’s users and released it online in August, according to media reports.

Stories are being heard across the globe, as well as in our state, of families torn apart, of children who are afraid of what’s happening to their parents, and of the tragedy of suicide.

Ministers have resigned from their churches.

Others are struggling with the guilt and shame of hidden sin, hoping that no one will find them out.

Churches, Christian organizations, and their leaders are grappling with

how to deal with the aftermath of Ashley Madison with grace and truth.

Christian leaders need to understand the extensive nature of the damage that can be done by extramarital affairs to both families and church congregations.

It will take months, and in some cases, even years, for complete healing to occur.

Many see this issue from only one perspective: it is a sin problem. And yes, it is a sin problem that requires confession, repentance and forgiveness.

There also may be circumstances in a person’s life that contribute to him or her being vulnerable to this kind of sin.

There is often a connection between a difficult past experience and a person’s current involvement with

pornography, marital infidelity, and other addictive behaviors.

This does not excuse the sinful behavior, but for many, when the underlying emotional problem is healed, issues like pornography and adultery, which lie above the surface, can also be healed.

LifeWay Christian Resources President Tom Ranier recently stated, “Christian leaders must lead by acknowledging the scandal of publicized adultery and addressing it with grace. But to be grace-filled does not mean we minimize the sins of adultery, lying, and betrayal.

“It is incredibly sad and tragic when Christians on the list have more to fear and less hope than non-believers on the list,” he said. “I fear that some Christians will retreat into a mode of legalism and judgment when grace should be pervasive. Now is the time for the body of Christ to be one

of grace, healing, and restoration.”

God is a loving, redemptive Heavenly Father who wants to bring healing to the hurt places in our lives.

Galatians 6:1-2 (HCSB) states, *“Brothers, if someone is caught in any wrongdoing, you who are spiritual should restore such a person with a gentle spirit, watching out for yourselves so you also won’t be tempted. Carry one another’s burdens; in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.”*

Granberry Counseling Centers are offering Christian counseling at NO COST to any Louisiana Southern Baptist minister or minister’s wife who has been impacted by the Ashley Madison situation. We have eleven counseling centers across the state.

You can find information about all of our counselors and locations at www.granberrycounseling.org or call us at 318.345.8200 or toll free at 877.345.7411.



DR. KATHY EICHELBERGER
Director
Granberry Counseling
Center, Monroe, La.

Baptisms from page one

had made a decision when he was younger and was baptized. However, as a teenager, Adams realized his true need for Christ but had not followed through with believer's baptism.

Adams told Trombatore he knew the river baptism event was approaching and that it was time for him to participate in baptism.

"He said he wanted to be baptized to be obedient," he said. "I told him he would give freedom to those who have that fear.

"We have people who make a decision to accept Christ but years pass before they get baptized, so he isn't the first to do this," he continued. "To see someone in leadership over them take that humble step is a really cool baptism story."

Adams said taking that next step before his entire church family was very humbling.

"No one expects staff to need baptism, but after a lot of praying and conviction I knew I had to follow through with it even though I was saved over seven years ago," Adams said. "I would not have chosen any

other way or setting to experience the baptism. Outside in the river and surrounded by friends and family was such a great time that I will never forget."

BECOMING A CHRIST FOLLOWER

Kelly Moravek decided to take the step of baptism by immersion along with her husband, Christopher, during River Fest, many years after experiencing baptism by sprinkling as an infant in the Catholic church.

When the couple discovered First West after a series of moves to other states, they connected with a Bible study group, participated in mission trips and learned of the importance of believer's baptism. It was then that the Moraveks decided that getting baptized by immersion at River Fest was what the Lord was leading them to do.

"With our church family and friends, there, in the midst of pouring rain, my husband and I were baptized, together, side-by-side, in the Ouachita

River, by several of our pastor friends," she said. "Amazing is always the first word that comes to mind when asked what it felt like. I always feel this warmth throughout my whole body when I think about it. We publically professed our faith and dedication to God in the presence of many – it is not something I will ever forget."

So far this year, First West has recorded 158 baptisms. They are on pace to baptize 175 people before the end of 2015.

River Fest provided a time for both of its campuses in West Monroe and Fairbanks to come together and celebrate another milestone of baptisms this year, said Dwight Munn, discipleship pastor at First West.

"Now that we are one church in two locations, our River Fest (river baptism) serves as a great way to bring both campuses together in fellowship and celebration of those God is adding to our church family," Munn said. "We have jumpers for the kids, a great catered outside meal, and a multigenerational gathering that is just wonderful to watch."



First West photo

During a First West baptism event in the Ouachita River, 31 people, including this young boy, experienced baptisms. Not even a summer shower could dampen the spirits of everyone in attendance. Nearly 600 people were present to witness the baptisms and take part in games, music, inflatables for the kids and a catered catfish supper.



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Janet Huckabee makes a swing through Central, North Louisiana

BY BRIAN BLACKWELL
Message Staff Writer
 ALEXANDRIA/PINEVILLE

ILLE – The wife of presidential candidate Mike Huckabee visited Louisiana Aug. 25-26, sharing her thoughts on the need for prayer, the condition of America and her husband’s bid for the highest elected office in the United States. She began Aug. 26 by visiting the Baptist Building in Alexandria where she attended the weekly prayer meeting and spoke to employees. During her message at the Baptist Building, Huckabee said

if everyone in the room had a chance to sit at the table with George Washington, Benjamin Franklin and Jesus Christ and

anything at all and would we be able to honestly say we are doing everything in our power to give our children and, yes, our grandchildren back a better America we grew up,” said Huckabee, a native of Lake Charles. “I think I would probably say we might not be able to do that.” Later, Huckabee shared the importance of having a team of 10 ladies praying for her on a daily basis. This team prays for such requests as an important speech, her husband as he travels on the



Philip Timothy photo

Louisiana Baptist Convention Executive Director David Hankins offers up a prayer for Janet Huckabee (center), who attended the building’s weekly prayer meeting. She is flanked by LBC President Steve Horn (left) and Louisiana College President Rick Brewer (right).

discuss the state of the country, what would they say to them. “Would you be able to say

See **HUCKABEE** on 12



Philip Timothy photo

Janet Huckabee, the wife of presidential candidate Mike Huckabee, visited Louisiana Aug. 25-26. After a whirlwind tour through south Louisiana, she made a stop at the Baptist Building in Alexandria for prayer meeting and then traveled across the river to Louisiana College for a speaking engagement. She made a stop in Natchitoches at Calvary Baptist Church before finishing her tour at First Bossier City.



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GBO allows Louisiana Baptists to respond to many needs

BY BRIAN BLACKWELL
Message Staff Writer

ALEXANDRIA – The bad news – Louisiana has seen hundreds of thousands of dollars re-routed to other parts of the country.

The good news – it's been going to help penetrate the lostness across the United States.

When Kevin Ezell became president of the North American Mission Board in 2010, he proposed, in concert with state convention leaders, a strategy that gradually shifted resources away from Southern states such as Louisiana that have a strong membership and financial base to states outside the South that typically do not have those same resources needed for ministry.

Louisiana Baptists' Executive Director David Hankins assured Ezell that Louisiana Baptists would respond positively to take care of their own.

"I shared with Dr. Ezell that Louisiana Baptists are happy to be a part of the effort to penetrate lostness in North America," said Hankins. "We believe our country needs to hear the Gospel.

"I also assured him that we would step up to the challenge of fully supporting missions and ministries in Louisiana."

Formerly, many mission projects and personnel were jointly supported by the state and NAMB.

Even though part of the support has gone away, the need for the ministries has not.

Hankins noted that in order for these much-needed missions and ministries to continue, the support for the Georgia Barnette State Missions Offering needs to increase – and he's confident the support will come.

"I'm confident God will stir the hearts of His people in the churches to ensure these efforts not only survive, but thrive," Hankins said.

Ministries supported through the Georgia Barnette Offering include church planting, emergency needs for mission churches,

disaster relief, Woman's Missionary Union scholarships and camps for children and youth, missions education, compassion ministries and outreach efforts such as 'Here for You,' Louisiana Baptists' new multi-media outreach strategy for the churches.

John Hebert, missions and ministry director for Louisiana Baptists, echoed Hankins'

comments.

"I believe Louisiana Bap-

tists are some of God's most generous people," Hebert said. "When we couple that fact with their awareness of the lostness of our state, it gives me great confidence that our work will go on stronger than ever in spite of the change in strategy."

The annual offering for state missions and ministries is named after Georgia Barnette, the WMU executive director/treasurer in Louisiana.

Every year Louisiana Baptists collect money for the Georgia Barnette State Missions Offering.

Sept. 13-20 has been set

aside as the Week of Prayer for state missions and ministries.

Resources, including videos, demonstrating the scope and impact of the Georgia Barnette Offering have been mailed to churches across the state.

Additional resources are available online at www.GeorgiaBarnette.org. This year's offering goal is \$1.8 million.

Hankins believes that the changing culture could serve as a catalyst for people to give.

"Our people see the stories on television or

via the internet and social media. They see how court decisions are reshaping their communities and they are concerned." Hankins continued. "People ask me on a regular basis 'what are we going to do in light of the direction of our culture?' My response is to increase the frequency and intensity of our prayers for our country and its leaders, and increase support for missions and ministries which can counteract the culture. The Georgia Barnette Offering allows us to respond to our culture with the love and the light of Christ."



John Hebert

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Thursday, Sept. 17 Worship Service, 7 p.m.
Michael Joe Harvell, speaker*

*Friday, Sept. 18 Inauguration Ceremony, 2 p.m.
Dr. Don Wilton,
Pastor, FBC Spartanburg, S.C., speaker*



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In wake of fatal shootings, Eastwood Baptist erects blue cross

BY BRIAN BLACKWELL
Message Staff Writer

HAUGHTON – In the wake of recent fatal shootings of law enforcement officers in Louisiana, Eastwood Baptist Church has erected a cross that lights up as the color blue.

While the 10-foot tall cross remains blue, the con-

gregation hopes those who pass by will notice the bright colors and be reminded to pray for and honor those policemen, sheriff's deputies and others serving them in law enforcement.

"We figured anything we can do to give recognition to our fellow officers is the right thing to do," said John Burnes, chairman of the

leadership team at Eastwood Baptist Church. "In Louisiana, our fallen officers have a target on themselves. The more we can get people to realize it's about praying and doing other things to minister to policemen rather than shoot them, the better off we will be as a society."

For Burnes, honoring law enforcement hits close to home.

His brother has served as a member of the Bossier City police department for 26 years and is a member at Eastwood.

Burnes also has relatives and friends who live in Sunset, where police officer Henry Nelson from the south Louisiana community lost his life responding to a disturbance call on the afternoon of Aug. 26.

When someone on the leadership team suggested Wednesday the color of the cross should be changed to blue, Burnes answered with an enthusiastic affirmation.



Submitted photo

In the wake of recent fatal shootings, a 10-foot blue cross has been erected at Eastwood Baptist Church to remind people to pray for and honor those policemen, sheriff's deputies and others serving in law enforcement.

The cross was turned blue at 7:45 p.m.

"Someone in our leadership team meeting asked if I thought it was a good idea and I said sure," Burnes said. "We had no idea when we put the cross onto the front of our sanctuary build-

ing two months ago that we would have so many officers who would die in the line of duty. The response from people who saw it just in the short time we've had it up is amazing."

See **BLUE CROSS** on 9

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FIRST COUSHATTA HOSTS JIMMY HOUSTON



The men's ministry of First Baptist Church in Coushatta hosted a family event featuring National Fresh Water Fishing Hall of Famer Jimmy Houston. At least 450 men, women and children enjoyed a delicious meal catered by Shaver's Catering out of Shreveport followed by a gospel presentation given by Houston, a well known pro angler and television personality. Several people made salvation decisions and many rededicated their lives to the Lord as a result of this event. Follow up is still being done to reach all of those who made decisions, according to Nathan Davis, pastor of FBC Coushatta. "God worked in a mighty way and we look forward to continuing to hear of His work through this event," Davis said.



First Coushatta photos

Organizer says God at work in community outreach

ALEXANDRIA – Walter Layssard, a contractor and a member of Homewood Baptist Church in Alexandria, is on fire for God.

"God is really in my life right now and He has laid it upon my heart to touch one million lives," Layssard said. "And that is my objective."

A talented songwriter and singer since the age of 14, Layssard has turned to the ministry and has put together a community outreach – *To Make Homewood Your Home* – in which he is inviting people to come to church, while also feeding lunch to the first 200 people, handing out 100 CDs filled with Christian songs by Charles Crawford

and two cases of Gideon Bibles. And it is all free.

He will hold his outreach on Sept. 12 from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. at Quick Print Printing Services, located at 1125 Texas Avenue in Alexandria.

"God has opened so many doors," Layssard said. "I can't say enough about Miss Sharon [Meranto] not only allowed me to use her parking lot but also provided me with the fliers and invitations I've been passing out. She donated three hours of her valuable time to make and print these fliers and invitations."

"People at our local radio and TV stations have also been so helpful helping to get the word out as well. It has been a

blessing to get this much help."

Layssard said he hopes other churches will attend this outreach, which he plans to do every two months.

"At every turn, God has provided for this event. It is truly amazing to watch Him at work," said Layssard. "I just want to serve God and if this is what He wants me to do, I am not going to let this opportunity slip by. I want to use the rest of my life serving him."

Blue Cross from page 8

Mark Mize, a deacon at Eastwood Baptist Church, helped install the cross. Since the cross was designed to light up for Christmas and Easter in colors other than blue, Mize never thought they would turn the cross to its current color.

"The police community is hurting right now," Mize said. "We just wanted to show our law enforcement family they are not alone in this battle. We don't want them to be overwhelmed by these series of events. To turn our cross blue is a small way to say we support you, we back you, we pray for you. The reason we have it blue is because we are grieving the loss of a fellow police officer."

This is not the first act of kindness the church has shown to local law enforcement.

Third, fourth and fifth grade girls from its Awana group hosted a banquet for the Bossier Parish Sheriff's Department and area school

patrol in May.

Eastwood Baptist still had the cross lit up blue on Sept. 3.

Since the cross has the ability to be changed to another color, the congregation will change it to other colors at various parts of the year.

Louisiana is presently tied for No. 1 with Texas in terms of law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty in 2015, according to the website Officer Down Memorial Page.

Nine officers have already died in the line of duty this year in the state.

Baptist Children's Home and Family Services

SEEKS DIRECTOR

The Illinois Baptist Children's Home seeks an Executive Director to replace retirement of current director at the end of 2016.

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For details, go to www.bchfs.com/employment.html

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Huckabee from page 6

campaign trail, an upcoming debate and spiritual attacks.

"I know these women will pray," she said. "And to me that has to be one of the most comforting things in this whole race that we are doing."

Near the end of her message, Louisiana Baptist Convention Executive Director David Hankins, Louisiana Baptist Convention President Steve Horn and Louisiana College President Rick Brewer joined Huckabee on stage for a time of prayer.

Horn, who last year organized several prayer meetings around the state, called it an honor to hear the wife of a

presidential candidate freely quote scripture and share her

Hankins echoed the thought.

"Her encouragement to follow God's direction even with no guarantee of the outcome is a challenge for all of us," Hankins said. "It was a blessing to hear a little of her story and we join with her group of 'angels (prayer partners)' in praying for her and Governor Huckabee as they follow God's leading."

In addition to visiting the Baptist Building on Aug. 26,

Huckabee made appearances at a radio station in Alexandria, at Louisiana College in Pineville, Calvary Baptist Church in Natchitoches and First Baptist Church in Bossier City.

Her schedule the day before included stops in Denham Springs, Greenwell Springs and Lafayette.

dependence on God.

"I was blessed by her testimony of building a prayer team around her," said Horn, pastor of First Baptist Church in Lafayette. "Since I have been actively praying for the Huckabees, I was especially honored to meet her and join with others in praying for her."



Joshua Joy Dara, pastor of Zion Hill Church in Pineville, leads a prayer for Janet Huckabee during her stop at Louisiana College. Also praying are Mike Evans, pastor of Elwood Baptist in Forest Hill; Philip Robertson, pastor of Philadelphia Baptist in Deville; LC President Rick Brewer; and Philip Caples, LC vice president of integration of faith and learning.



Thomas Boyd, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Natchitoches, prays with Janet Huckabee. She spoke at Calvary and other locations throughout Louisiana during her two days in the state.



Brad Jurkovich, pastor of First Baptist Church in Bossier City, visits with Janet Huckabee during her final stop in the state during a recent tour.



Ministers' Wives' Retreat

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Please email WMM@LouisianaBaptists.org or call Women's Missions and Ministry at 1-800-622-6549 or 318-448-3402 for additional information.

ON THE MOVE

■ Stephen Jennings is the new associate pastor of music and worship at Colyell Baptist Church, Livingston.

■ Michael Shamblyn is the new pastor at Emmanuel, Lake Charles.

■ John Astling is the new pastor at University Baptist Church, Lake Charles.

■ Wayne (wife Michelle) DeSlattes is new as pastor at Kingston Road Baptist Church, Shreveport.

■ Jeremy (wife Julie) Shepherd is the new pastor at Pineville Park Baptist Church, Pineville.

■ Jacob (wife Amanda) is new as minister of local ministry evangelism at Summer Grove Baptist Church, Shreveport.

■ Robbie Briggs is new minister of music at New Hope Baptist Church, DeQuincy.

■ Tommie Hodge from New Hope, DeQuincy, to Pine Terrace Baptist Church, Milton, FL.

■ Luke Hand is new youth and family pastor at Amite Baptist Church, Denham Springs.

■ Bill Stroud is the interim pastor at Caddo Prairie Baptist Church, Hosston.

■ Pat Lofton has been called as the interim pastor at Tillou Baptist Church, Bastrop.

■ Daniel (wife Sarah) Guagliardo is the new youth minister at Central Baptist Church, Springhill.

■ Jeffery Triplet (wife Dianna) is the new youth minister at First Baptist Church, Haynesville.

HOMECOMING

■ Vick Baptist Church: Celebrating 100th Homecoming, Sept. 13, 10 a.m. Speakers: former pastors. Music: Bo and Cee Cee Edwards. Lunch will be served after the service. Pastor: Denton 'Dobie' Perkins.

■ Christ Baptist Church, Houma: 60th Anniversary, Sept. 11, 12, 13. Associational singing will be held on Sept. 11; recalling memories of the past & dessert social on Sept. 12. Church anniversary celebration, Sept. 13, 10 a.m. Speaker: Past Pastor Marcell McGee followed by dinner on the grounds. Services of celebration featuring testimonies and memories of what the church has meant to lives in the community and special music at 1 p.m. Pastor: Thurman Callais.

■ Big Island Baptist Church, Deville: 126th Annual Home-

coming, Sept. 13, 10 a.m. A potluck lunch will follow the service. Guest Speaker: Shaun Fontenot. Pastor: David Gatch.

■ First Baptist Church, Bienville: 121st Homecoming, Sept. 20, 10 a.m., special music, followed by service, and a catered meal after the service. Speaker: Charles Middleton, former pastor. Pastor: Edwin Rasbury.

■ Grosse Tete Baptist Church: 75th Anniversary Celebration - Jesus Christ, Our Cornerstone, Sept. 26, 10 a.m. Speaker: Howard Turner. A jambalaya lunch will follow the service. Pastor: Mark Robinson.

■ Alto Baptist Church, Alto: Homecoming celebration, Sept. 27, 10:30 a.m. Dinner on the grounds will follow after the services at noon. Speaker: Kelly Clark. Pastor: Alan Miller.

REVIVAL

■ Woodland Baptist Church, Springfield: Revival, Sept. 13-16. Evangelist: Steve Carrier and Megaforce Ministries. Pastor: Josh Powell.

■ First Baptist Church, Oakdale: Terrific Tuesdays revival meetings, Sept. 15, 22 and 29. Speakers: Mark Tolbert (9/15); Robbie Rollins (9/22), Herb Dickerson (9/29). Pastor: Michael McIntosh.

■ New Ramah Baptist Church, Castor: Revival, Sept. 20-23, Sunday 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. There will be dinner on the grounds following the 11 a.m. service Monday-Wednesday, 7 p.m. Pastor: Carl Griffith.

■ New Prospect Baptist Church, Dry Prong: Revival, Sept. 20-23, 10:30 a.m. Speaker: Joe Aulds. Pastor: Trey Lewis

■ Crossroads Baptist Church, Farmerville: Revival, Sept. 27-30, Speaker: Joe Aulds. Pastor: Jeff Breland.

LAGNIAPPE

■ Don Johnson is available for pulpit supply or interim in the Lake Charles area. If interested, call 337.478.4553.

■ Tyler Bier, Ross Ferrill and Daniel Rice were ordained as deacons on Aug. 30 at Mandeville First Baptist Church. Pastor: Ken Schroeder.

■ Trinity Baptist Church, Eunice: Learn about Revelations, Sept. 12 & Sept. 19, 6 p.m. Speaker: Gordon Scoggins, noted speaker on prophecy of Revelation. Pastor Alvin Ogea.

■ First Baptist Church, Arcadia: Beth Moore Living Proof Si-

mulcast, Sept. 12. Cost: free. Lunch will be provided. For more information, call 318.263.8474.

■ First Baptist Church, Covington: Living Proof Live Simulcast with Beth Moore and Travis Cotrell, Sept. 12, 9:30 a.m. till 4:15 p.m. in the ROC. Lunch will be on your own from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Tickets are available online for \$10, after Sept. 6 tickets may be purchased at the door for \$15. Limited childcare is available for preschoolers (two months and up) with reservation by Sept. 6. Email ddrivon@fbccov.org or call the church office at 985.892.2149. Pastor: Waylon Bailey.

■ First Baptist Church, Houma: Living Proof Live Simulcast with Beth Moore and Travis Cotrell, Sept. 12, 9:30 a.m. - 4:15 p.m. Doors open at 8 a.m. Cost of tickets is \$30 through Aug. 31 and \$35 after this date. Cost includes simulcast, view guide, continental breakfast, and lunch. Theme for simulcast is 'Audacious.' Books by that title will be sold the day of the simulcast. No child care will be provided. For more information or to buy tickets, contact church office at 985.851.2520 or Women's Ministry Director Tina Boquet at tina@fbhouma.com. Pastor: Steve Folmar.

■ Koran Baptist Church, Haughton: Living Proof Live Simulcast with Beth Moore and Travis Cotrell, Sept. 12, 8:30 a.m. - 4:15 p.m. Cost: \$25 and you can pay at the door and includes breakfast, lunch and handouts. For more information, call Donna Garison at 318.455.4508. Pastor: Mike Reichard.

■ First Baptist Church, Jonesboro: Jackson Woman's Missionary Union 2nd Annual Crafty Café fundraiser for local missions, Sept. 12, 8 a.m. - 2 p.m. There will be handcrafted items, antiques/collectibles, baked goods, and coffee bar. Breakfast and lunch options are available. For more information, call 318.623.7873.

■ Pine Grove Baptist Church, Castor: The Master's Four Quartet in concert, Sept. 12, 6:30 p.m. A love offering will be taken.

■ First Baptist Church, Head of Island: Gospel singing with Gloryland, Sept. 12, 6 p.m. A fellowship will follow. For more information, please call Terry or Sharon Simoneaux at 225.698.6654. Pastor: Rocky Brown.

■ First Baptist Church, Minden: Honoring Everyday Heroes, Sept. 13, 10:45 a.m. The service will honor policemen, firemen, wildlife and fisheries agents and paramedics. Pastor: Leland Crawford.

■ Hebron Baptist Church, Denham Springs: Ladies prayer

event, Sept. 14, 7 p.m. Ladies are invited to come and pray together. For more information, contact Patti Higginbotham at 225.939.8185 or email her at sxmimb@cox.net. Pastor: Joe Alain.

■ Acadian Baptist Center, Eunice: To Protect and Serve - Senior Adult Luncheon, Sept. 15, 10 a.m. registration, program, 10:30 a.m.; lunch, noon. Speaker: Lt. Clay Higgins, spokesman for St. Landry Parish Sheriff's Office. Music: Benji Richard, First Baptist Port Barre. There is no cost for this event but a 'love offering' will be taken. Please RSVP (337.457.9047) the number attending to the ABC office by Friday, Sept. 11.

■ The Mark Trammel Quartet, a Southern Baptist group, and Mark Lanier will be in concert Sept. 17, 6 p.m. at Simms Wesleyan Church, which is just south of Pollock. A suggested donation of \$10 is requested at the door.

■ First Baptist Church, DeRidder: Louisiana Baptist Singing Ministers in concert, Sept. 17. Supper, 5:30 p.m. Concert, 6:30 p.m. The meal is free but you must make a reservation by Sept. 11. Please call the church office at 337.463.9047 for reservations or more information. Pastor: Lindsey Burns.

■ Acadian Baptist Center, Eunice: 'See Ya at the Pole' Rally for youth, Sept. 18, 3 p.m. Speaker: Ryan James, Music: David Knuckles. Cost: \$5 per person which includes meal and use of all recreation facilities - concludes with worship.

■ Dry Creek Baptist Encampment: See You at The Pole Rally, Sept. 19, 5-8:30 p.m. Speaker: Eric Johnson. Worship: I Am Third. Students fellowship together and plan the following Wednesday's SYATP prayer event. Cost: Free (a love offering will be taken). Bring a picnic supper.

■ First Baptist Church, DeRidder: Unshakable Faith - Women's Ministry Conference, Sept. 19, 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. Speaker: Beth Greer. Tickets: \$20 (includes lunch). Tickets are available in the church office. Pastor: Lindsey Burns.

■ First Baptist Church, Vidalia: Ordination service for Jase Ellis to the Gospel ministry and Michael Garrett and Tance Hughes to the deacon ministry, Sept. 20, 6 p.m. Pastor: Bill McCullin.

■ First Baptist Church, Hornbeck: See You At The Pole, Sept. 23, 7 a.m. at Hornbeck High School. SYATP Youth Rally, 6-8 p.m. will be held at FBC Hornbeck. Pastor: Jack Bell.

■ Hillcrest Baptist Church, Franklinton: See You At The Pole, Sept. 23, 7 a.m. at Franklinton High School. Pastor: Andrew Voss.

Ministry evangelism conferences set

Dr. Charles Roesel, former pastor of FBC, Leesburg, Fla., will lead ministry evangelism conferences Sept. 21-24 at various locations throughout Louisiana.

Those attending the conference will learn how to establish ministry evangelism and will receive a copy

of Roesel's latest book "It's A God Thing," which includes 101 ideas on ministry evangelism.

Locations and registration information for the free event can be found at <https://louisianabaptists.org/event/ministry-evangelism-workshops-shreveport/>



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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.

kysmp ufb dm db ydm yfbv, fbv yp kdcc xyisjeycz

njiep ydm ucssi, fbv kdcc efxypi xyp kypfx dbxs ydm

efibpi, wjx xyp gyfuu yp kdcc wjib kdxu udip

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Clues:
U = F; D = I

Answer to August 27, Scripture Crypto:
Mark eleven: eighteen

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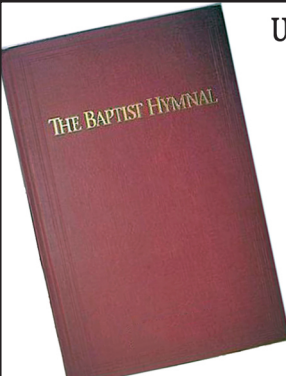
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IMB from page one

— even since the SBC—that not only did we have that \$21 million shortfall in 2014, but we were also using global property sales to cover some of our expenses in 2014 that was to the tune of \$18 million.

“So when you add those two numbers together you realize in total, in 2014, we were spending \$39 million more than people were giving to us—and that was just one year,” he summarized.

Platt offered that IMB had been doing this “going back to 2010,” and the organization had covered the overspending by dipping into reserves as well as by selling global properties, adding “our organization has spent, combined, \$210 million more than people have given to us.”

IMB spokesperson Wendy Norvelle subsequently explained to *The Baptist Message* that, in the past, IMB’s budgeting process included use of a formula that employed a four-year rolling average of revenues (monies received) to set its budget.

The IMB used the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering goal to set its total budget (i.e. split between the operating budget and capital budget), and the four-year rolling average was used to determine how much of the goal would be applied to planning the operating budget. Any remainder of the goal not used to construct the operating budget was used in creating the capital budget.

Then in 2014 and 2015, the SBC entity changed its process to include the entire \$175 million goal in putting together just its operating budget.

She also said IMB trustees have approved use of reserves in the past to cover one-time contingencies such as technology upgrades, or special meet-

ings, and similar emergent needs, but not to pay for normal operating expenses.

Norvelle subsequently told *The Baptist Message* the overspending was not a surprise to IMB leaders but had been a deliberate process to draw down the funding that was available in contingency reserves.

EXTRA CASH, BUT MORE EXPENSE

According to data IMB provided, although it did not reach its goal of \$175 million from 2010-2014, it did see an accumulation of more than \$20.5 million during 2011-2014 above what churches and individuals had contributed in 2010.

Despite these gains, IMB’s hopeful forecasting from 2010-2014 resulted in a net shortfall of \$105,659,443, which contributed to a total of \$210 million of overspending since 2010.

Consequently, even selling off global properties worth almost \$197 million, the IMB had to draw down its operating reserves to less than \$213 million at the end of 2014 – representing a balance of only 4 months of budgeted expenses because some of that amount is restricted (e.g. endowments and global missionary capital fund).

Year	LMCO Goal	Actual Gifts	Compared to 2010	Difference from LMCO goal
2010	\$175 million	\$145,662,925	-----	-\$29,337,075
2011	\$175 million	\$146,828,116	+ \$1,165,191	-\$28,171,884
2012	\$175 million	\$149,276,304	+ \$3,613,379	-\$25,723,696
2013	\$175 million	\$154,057,852	+ \$8,394,927	-\$20,942,148
2014	\$175 million	\$153,002,394	+ \$7,339,469	-\$21,997,606
TOTALS	\$875 million	\$748,827,591	+ \$20,512,966	-\$126,172,409 (- \$105,659,443 net)

FUTURE ROADMAP

IMB leaders hope to reestablish sound financial

footing by offering voluntary early retirement with generous incentives that have not yet been decided, according to Platt.

Details will be announced to IMB personnel Sept. 10, an IMB press handout stated.

This first phase of regaining stability involves accelerating attrition that otherwise would have taken place during the course of the next several years.

The IMB will continue to appoint 300 new missionaries this year and next year to account for ongoing personnel changes due to retirements, deaths and other anticipated causes. So the 600-800 reduction in people will be in addition to these expected turnovers.

The aim is to make it attractive for someone who is nearing retirement to make the transition several years early.

If the first offer does not produce enough contraction in IMB’s rolls by December 2015, the entity’s next move will be to provide its people another opportunity “to voluntarily transition into work outside of the IMB,” presumably before taking other actions to reduce personnel.

However, according to the IMB notes, because of its “tight financial condition” – in six months, on its current course, the IMB will be forced to use another month of operating reserves – it will be more difficult to be as generous in future offers to encourage voluntary departures. Thus “VRI will be the best option that can be offered.”

Reducing its workforce is the first phase of Platt’s plan to create a roadmap for the future. The second phase, described as “concluding the reset,” has been in motion already and entails “consolidating support services, recalibrating mobilization, assessing global engagement and re-envisioning training.”

See IMB on 20

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Local contractor donates crane, labor for Georgia Barnette Center

By BRIAN BLACKWELL
Message Staff Writer

WOODWORTH – Baptist roots run deep through Cecil Gassiott's blood.

He is a member at Calvary Baptist Church in Woodworth and went to Rapides High School in Lecompte with John Hebert, missions and ministry director for Louisiana Baptists.

So when the chance to donate manpower and use of his crane for laying trusses for the Georgia Barnette Conference Center became available, Gassiott knew this was an opportunity too good to pass up.

"I have been so, so blessed through the years doing a few volunteer projects that I try not to miss one," said Gassiott, a general contractor in Alexandria. "The end result winds up being so much more fruitful than any paying job can be. Just one 'anything' from God can change your life and your business. Plus,

this job is at home and we're working with friends."

The crane began operating around 7 a.m. Aug. 24 at Tall Timbers Conference Center and Gassiott's crane finished on Sept. 3, but not without a small setback that was quickly resolved.

Two days into the laying of trusses, the team on site discovered the pieces were slightly taller than what was needed. But Rogers Manufacturing Corporation in West Monroe, the company that built the trusses, rebuilt them in a day – at no extra cost – and shipped them to Tall Timbers by the final morning of the week.

"I am so delighted with the professional way Rogers Manufacturing handled this situation," said John Hebert, director of missions and ministries for Louisiana Baptists. "They recognized the mistake and immediately corrected it on their own initiative."

See **CRANE** on 17



Brian Blackwell photo

A giant crane from local contractor Cecil Gassiott, a member of Calvary Baptist Church in Woodworth, lays trusses for the Georgia Barnette Conference Center at Tall Timbers Conference Center in Woodworth. Gassiott donated the use of a his crane and a work crew to help volunteers put the trusses in place.

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Crain from page 16

way they expedited the fix helped us stay on schedule without any additional expense.

Our team is proud of Rogers Manufacturing and would give our highest endorsement of their product and professionalism. Chris Huckabay and Derek Moody did not stop until this issue was resolved."

Now that Gassiott's company has laid the trusses, volunteers from various Louisiana Baptist churches will continue working on other areas of the conference center until sometime next spring.

With the exception of Gassiott's employees and some professional contractors who poured the concrete slab on June 29, volunteers have provided the labor for the project.

Those include Kingdom Builders from Louisiana and Texas, a group from Calvary Baptist Church in Alexandria, two men from Texas, a hus-

band-wife team from Arkansas and others from Boyce, Franklinton and Arnaudville.



Brian Blackwell photo

Robert Woods (left), missions builder strategist for Louisiana Baptists, looks over plans with Dan Roberts from First Baptist Church in Dry Prong.

Jacob Boles, a member of Kingdom Builders and First Baptist Church in Bastrop, was on hand to assist with the work on Monday.

"I'm doing it for the Lord," Boles said. "Beside, somebody's got to do it. It's a great avenue of service to Him."

When the project is completed, the 8,400-square-foot center on the grounds of Tall Timbers Conference Center will have six small group rooms and a large auditorium that can be configured for up

to 580 participants.

The center also will feature a state-of-the-art sound system and lighting.

The center is named after Georgia Barnette, the first elected and paid Woman's Missionary Union executive director/treasurer in Louisiana. Every year Louisiana Baptists collect the Georgia Barnette State Missions Offering which supports missions and ministries throughout the state.

Since early 2013, Louisiana Baptists' missions and ministry team led by John Hebert has raised money for the new center, making hundreds of presentations in churches, Woman's Mis-

sionary Union groups, individuals, missions education groups, associational groups and annual meetings of associations.

Robert Woods, missions builder strategist for Louisiana Baptists, is hoping for a completion date of March, dependent upon favorable weather conditions and enough volunteers to help with the labor.

He voiced his gratitude for Gassiott.

"I appreciate him volunteering his crane and men for as long as it takes to get the trusses set," Woods said.

Interested volunteers should contact project coordinator Bill Temple at 318.368.5129 or email bjtemple71241@aol.com.

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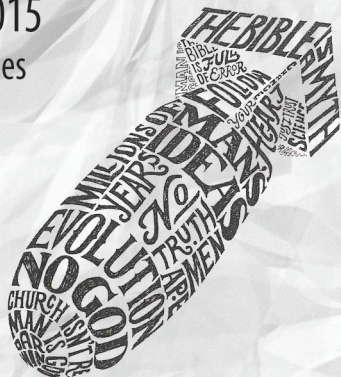
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Pioneer missionary doctor Wana Ann Fort dies at 91

BY STAFF
Baptist Press

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — Missionary doctor Wana Ann Gibson Fort, 91, died Aug. 31 in Baton Rouge.

Fort and her husband, the late Milton “Giles” Fort Jr., served with the then-called Foreign Mission Board as pioneer missionary doctors at Sanyati Baptist Hospital

in Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe).

At this hospital, Fort and her husband helped launch a spiritual awakening through medical missions.

The Forts, appointed as missionaries in 1952, led countless patients to Christ.

“We were committed to being God’s hands of mercy and healing to souls and bodies,” she once said.

She and her husband raised five sons in Zimbabwe.

Three have served or continue to serve as missionaries with the International Mission Board. Two of the Forts’ sons are medical doctors.

“Mom lived out the reality of her faith,” said Gordon Fort, one of Wana Ann’s sons and IMB senior ambassador. “As wife, momma, teacher, doctor, women’s worker, and serving missions support functions, she demonstrated what it means to live a life of obedience to the Master. It has been our incredible privilege to

have been a part of her life’s journey.”



Photo courtesy of Fort family

Pioneer missionary doctor Wana Ann Gibson Fort, 91, died Aug. 31 in Baton Rouge, La. Fort and her husband, the late Milton “Giles” Fort Jr., served at Sanyati Baptist Hospital in Southern Rhodesia.

During the Forts’ missionary service in Africa, the Shona people named Fort “Mai Chiremba,” meaning “Mother Doctor.” She led Chief Whozhele, the area leader at Sanyati, to faith in Jesus Christ after he was her patient.

Fort was one of the first people that missionary Tim Cearley met when he arrived to serve in Rhodesia in 1976. Cearley

now serves as IMB affinity group strategy leader for Sub-Saharan African peoples.

“Her big smile and excitement about young people joining the [missionary] force, as well as her love for discipling African people, was an inspiration to me after [her] over 25 years on the field,” he said.

When Cearley and his wife

returned to Africa as career missionaries in 1983, Wana Ann and Giles welcomed them into their home. From the Forts, the Cearleys learned a passion for language, culture and, most importantly, “a desire for people to come to know the Lord.” Cearley also noted that Fort was active in working with and discipling women.

“It’s impossible to think about Wana Ann without thinking of their home in Sanyati, where they served as medical doctors,” he said. “The sons they raised in that place have also had a huge impact on Africa. I’m thankful for the years of knowing Wana Ann on the field, and since her retirement. She’s had an amazing life.”

Fort served as a pediatrician at Sanyati until 1978. When the family moved to Harare (formerly Salisbury), Zimbabwe, she ministered in the church and at home. She also served as mission financial administrator and as treasurer.

“When my youngest brother Grady was born with Down syndrome, it was Mom’s skills as a pediatrician in caring for his special needs that allowed them to stay on the field and continue their missionary service,” Gordon Fort said. “The

See FORT on 19



Romans 10:9-10

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Fort from page 18

fact that Grady is alive today at 54 and thriving is a tribute to her medical gifts."

The Forts retired from missionary service in September 1988 after nearly 36 years with IMB.

Wana Ann Fort wrote an autobiography of her years as a missionary doctor, "A Thousand Times Yes," from New Hope Publishers.

"Way more than once we were asked, 'Do you really like living in Africa?'" she said in the book. "I did not have to think about my answer. It was always a thousand times, 'Yes!'"

About her call to missions to this remote area, Fort wrote, "I came to the place in prayer that I could tell the Lord this was impossible for me to do, but I would commit my way to Him, trusting in Him to bring it all to pass for His honor. How marvelous it is that God knows the best way for His children!"

Fort was born June 21, 1924, in Harrisonburg, La., and was the oldest of seven

girls.

She accepted Jesus Christ as her Savior at age 12.

Throughout her childhood, she was involved in Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) educational programs, where she developed a love for international missions.

Fort attended Louisiana Tech University during World War II; in fact, during her first semester, Pearl Harbor was bombed in December 1941.

While attending a Baptist Student Union conference at Ridgecrest, a LifeWay Conference Center in North Carolina, Fort dedicated her life to world missions and planned to be a missionary doctor.

During her college years, she met her husband, Giles, of Fort Worth, Texas. He graduated from Texas A&M University and planned to attend medical college.

After completing service in the Navy, he also intended to become a missionary doctor. Wana Ann Fort graduated

from Louisiana Tech in the fall of 1944, summa cum laude.

Giles and Wana Ann were married on June 14, 1946, in Harrisonburg, and both attended Baylor College of Medicine.

Wana Ann Fort graduated with honors from Baylor College of Medicine in 1949, one of three women in a class of 62 graduates. She worked as a doctor in pediatrics at Jefferson Davis Hospital in Houston, Texas.

Fort was a lifelong member of WMU, and a member of Parkview Baptist Church in Baton Rouge.

Her survivors include five sons: Giles Fort III, M.D., of Louisiana, David Fort, M.D., West Africa, Gordon Fort, Virginia, Gregg Fort, Zimbabwe, and Grady Fort, Louisiana; four daughters-in-law; 14 grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren; four sisters and two brothers-in-law: Jane Noonan, of Florida, Polly and Don Hamilton, Oklahoma, Evelyn and Wayne McDon-



IMB photo

At Sanyati Baptist Hospital, Dr. Wana Ann Fort and her husband helped launch a spiritual awakening through medical missions. During Fort's missionary service in Africa, the Shona people named her "Mai Chiremba," meaning "Mother Doctor."

ald, South Carolina, and Rose Ellzey, Louisiana; and nieces and nephews.

Nearly 250 cumulative years of missionary service are represented in the Fort

family.

The family requests that contributions be made to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering through a Southern Baptist church or online.

National CP YTD 1.13% over projection

NASHVILLE (BP) – Year-to-date contributions to Southern Baptist national and international missions and ministries received by the SBC Executive Committee are \$174,276,734.99, or 1.13 percent above the year-to-date budgeted goal, and are 1.42 percent ahead of contributions received during the same time frame last year, a news release from SBC Executive Committee President Frank S. Page reported.

The total includes receipts from state conventions and fellowships, churches and individuals for distribution, according to the 2014-15 SBC Cooperative Program Allocation Budget.

As of August 31, gifts received by the Executive Committee for distribution through the Cooperative Program Allocation Budget represent 101.13 percent of the \$172,333,333.33 year-to-date budgeted amount

to support Southern Baptist ministries globally and across North America. The total is \$2,434,843.37 more than the \$171,841,891.62 received through the end of August 2014.

Designated year-to-date giving of \$191,161,942.22 is 0.40 percent, or \$752,910.23, above the \$190,409,031.99 received at this point last year. This total includes only those gifts received and distributed by the EC through close of business on Aug. 31 and does not reflect

designated gifts contributed directly to SBC entities. Designated contributions include the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions, the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for North American Missions, Southern Baptist Global Hunger Relief and other special gifts.

August CP allocation receipts for SBC work totaled \$15,417,216.61. Designated gifts received during August amounted to \$5,551,127.74.

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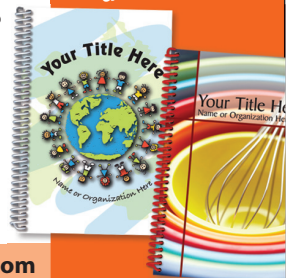
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Federal judge jails defiant Kentucky clerk for contempt

ASHLAND, Ky. – A defiant county clerk who refused to issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples is now in the custody of federal marshals.

During an appearance in court Sept. 3, a federal judge ordered Kim Davis to serve jail time for contempt of court for refusing to obey the ruling of the U.S. Supreme Court. Davis, who has served in the county clerk office for 27 years, denied issuing marriage licenses to same-sex couples

even after the Supreme Court ruled in June they were legal in all 50 states.

Davis has objected to issuing the licenses based on her Christian beliefs that she believes violates God's authority.

In a statement issued earlier this week, Davis said, "I never imagined a day like this would come, where I would be asked to violate a central teaching of Scripture and of Jesus Himself regarding marriage. To issue a marriage license which con-

flicts with God's definition of marriage, with my name affixed to the certificate, would violate my conscience. It is not a light issue for me. It is a Heaven or Hell decision."

According to the Associated Press, an emotional Davis testified for 20 minutes, describing how she became a Christian.

The judge said his only alternative was to place Davis in jail because he believed she would not comply with his orders

even if fined. A deputy escorted Davis out of the courtroom.

Among those in support of Davis is presidential candidate and former Arkansas Baptist pastor Mike Huckabee.

Shortly after the judge's ruling, Huckabee stated on Twitter that "Kim Davis in federal custody removes all doubts about the criminalization of Christianity in this country. We must defend #ReligiousLiberty!"

IMB from page 15

BOTTOM LINE

Platt stressed two key points in making his presentation via telephone, and both emphases expressed his concern about the impact of the IMB's actions on people.

First, he said the budgeting change was not a reflection on past IMB leaders.

"So, I want to be clear in describing all of this, and, I want to ask you all to be clear in communicating all this that my aim is in no way to question decisions by previous leadership across the IMB during these years," Platt told the press

during the conference call. "As I mentioned, previous leaders put in place a plan to slowly reduce our number of missionaries through normal attrition, through reduced new missionary appointments, while using reserves and global property sales that we've had to keep as many missionaries as possible on the field."

"What we've come to now is the realization that that plan is no longer viable in light of current realities," Platt said. "So, IMB can't continue to overspend as we have. We don't have the reserves or global property sales to be able to do

that."

Secondly, he said the voluntary departures were difficult for him to announce, because of the family relationship that exists among IMB personnel.

"These are brothers and sisters who have spent and are spending their lives in various capacities to spread the Gospel among those who've never heard it," he said. "And I see them. I want to support, serve them, every way I can – we can – for the spread of the Gospel through them."

"Not only that I want to see multitudes more of people spreading the Gospel alongside

them in the future," he continued. "But, these numbers represent a reality that I can't ignore personally and we can't ignore organizationally."

But, Platt said "for the sake

of short term financial responsibility and long term organizational stability" the reduction in personnel combined with the implementation of a new budgeting discipline was essential.

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