

*“Unless your
righteousness
surpasses that of
the scribes and
Pharisees.”*

— Matthew 5:20
(NASB)

BAPTIST Message

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LOUISIANA COLLEGE'S 158th ANNUAL COMMENCEMENT

Brewer to grads: 'Do hard work ... and then some'

BY AL QUARTEMONT

Special to the Message

PINEVILLE — The message Dr. Rick Brewer gave at the 158th commencement of the college he only recently became president of could not have been clearer.

“Rebel against society’s low expectations,” Brewer told the 147 graduates of Louisiana College on Saturday, May 16. “Do hard work.”

In that commencement address, Brewer not only gave the 123 undergraduates and 24 masters students a life-long charge, he may have set a tone for the future of LC, itself.

“The prevalent philosophy of our culture today is, ‘I am going to do what is the least that is expected of me and try to get the most payment for it,’” Brewer said. “In other words, minimum effort for maximum return. Shoddiness and lack of extra effort should never take place in the mind of a Christ follower.”

Brewer called on the students to live their lives under what he termed “The Rebekah Principle.” He used the example of Isaac’s future wife (Genesis 24), who not only served water for Abraham’s servants, but put in the extra effort to water the group’s



Submitted photo

Jessica Taylor of Deville was one of 123 undergraduates and 24 masters students to receive a degree May 16 during spring commencement at Louisiana College from new LC President Rick Brewer. Taylor is an elementary education major.

camels, too.

“After you’ve done what’s asked of you, you do a bit extra, you do even more,” Brewer said. “I’m here to tell you, we not only would see excellence in the market place, but the people doing the hiring would come to our churches to hire Christians. They would know we would do the job...

and then some.”

Those three words: And. Then. Some. Brewer said it will make a difference in the graduates’ lives when they go the extra mile instead of falling prey to the current culture’s mindset of only doing what is required. He

See **COMMENCEMENT** on 3

Gov. Jindal signs executive order for religious liberty

BY PHILIP TIMOTHY
& BRIAN BLACKWELL

Baptist Message

BATON ROUGE — Hours after a religious freedom bill was struck down in committee May 20, Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal moved quickly to sign an executive order that afternoon which captured both the intent and much of the language of the Louisiana Marriage and Conscience Act.



Bobby Jindal

“In Louisiana, the state should not be able to take adverse action against a person for their belief in traditional marriage,” read a statement issued from the governor’s office.

“That’s why I’m issuing an Executive Order this evening to prevent the state from discriminating against people, charities and family-owned businesses with deeply held religious beliefs that



Michael Johnson

See **EXECUTIVE ORDER** on 6

Father and son earn their U.S. citizenship

BY BRIAN BLACKWELL

Message Staff Writer

FLORIEN — Arturo Us Sr. is proud to be an American.

He’s reminded of that every day as he ministers to Hispanics throughout a three-parish area, preaching from the pulpit on Sundays at his church and, also, when he thinks about the United States citizenship he earned on Nov. 6.

See **CITIZENSHIP** on 9



Arturo Us and his son, Arturo Jr., proudly display their US citizenship certificates in front of the courthouse in Alexandria. The two are pastors of Louisiana Baptist Hispanic congregations and received their citizenship during a naturalization ceremony on May 13.

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Horn: 'Humbled and blown away' by positive response to 'The Pledge'

BY BRIAN BLACKWELL
Message Staff Writer

ALEXANDRIA – Enthusiastic. Burdened. Inspired. Confident.

That was the mood inside a room of more than 20 pastors from Louisiana Baptist congregations of all sizes and locations during a recent meeting in which they sought to reignite a passion for the Cooperative Program and cooperative missions through an initiative called "The Pledge."

"I need to be challenged," said First Lafayette Pastor and current LBC President Steve Horn. "I need to be challenged in every area of my life. If not challenged to give, we always fall back to status quo."

"We believe we can do more together than we can do by

ourselves," Horn told the May 14 meeting of 20 pastors. "And we believe in the methodology of our cooperative endeavors and our Cooperative program. It has served us well and will serve us well in the future."

First announced during the Louisiana Baptist Executive Board meeting on May 5, The Pledge is a plan to challenge churches giving less than 3 percent to the Cooperative Program to move to 5 percent; churches giving between 3 and 8 percent are encouraged to increase by 2 percent; and churches giving between 8 and 9.9 percent to go to 10 percent. Churches who already give 10 percent in their Cooperative Program gifts will be thanked and encouraged to prayerfully give something more; that could be increasing

by 1 percent or just reaffirming a commitment to continue giving.

The meeting, held in the Louisiana Baptist Building in Alexandria, was the first Horn and others on his leadership team plan to attend throughout the next six months as they visit, mostly through one-to-one meetings, with pastors to encourage them to say yes to The Pledge. Among the pastors who have agreed to serve on the leadership team are former LBC Presidents Waylon Bailey of First Covington and Philip Robertson of Philadelphia Baptist in Deville. Eddie Wren, pastor of First Rayville and current president of the Pastor's Conference, Lonnie Gothrup of Houston River in Sulphur, and Aaron Burgner, pastor of Summer Grove Baptist Church in Shreveport along with first vice-president Lonnie Tucker, pastor of Still Water Baptist Church in Hammond, and second vice-president Joe Senn, pastor of Crockett Point Baptist Church



Brian Blackwell photo

LBC President Steve Horn, pastor of First Baptist Church, Lafayette, held a meeting of captains of The Pledge initiative at the Louisiana Baptist Building on May 14. Announced during the LBC Executive Board meeting last week, the Pledge supports Louisiana Baptists Advance Plan which increases the percentages forwarded to SBC missions and ministries as churches increase their Cooperative Program gifts.

in Crowville.

The eight pastors on the leadership team have agreed to accept The Pledge and secure five additional Louisiana Baptist pastors, bringing the total to 40 captains. Those 40 are then asked to enlist three recruiters. Each recruiter then enlists one partner, bringing the total to 288.

The goal is for the 40 captains to have recruited three recruiters by July 1. The next goal is for those 120 recruiters to each enlist one partner by Aug. 15.

Horn is hoping and believes the nearly 300 members of The Pledge team will lead their churches to accept The Pledge by the time the 2015 LBC Annual Meeting convenes at First Baptist Church in Bossier City in November.

Already, other captains have indicated they have recruited fellow pastors to serve on the Pledge team.

Jessie Charpentier, pastor of Jenkins Memorial Baptist Church in St. Martinville, said he plans to begin recruiting soon. He is confident the Cooperative Program is the best way for all churches to support missions in the state and beyond.

"When you see the genius of this thing, it blows you away," Charpentier said. "This is the way to do it."

Chad Gilbert, pastor of Edgewater Baptist Church in New

See PLEDGE on 3

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Commencement from page one

even gave each graduate two orange wrist bands with the words written on them – one for themselves and the other for an accountability partner.

Brewer used his first graduation ceremony at LC to spotlight the achievements of several students. Not only were all the graduates seated on the stage of Guinn Auditorium, four of them were asked by Brewer to share their experiences at LC.

Those students included:

■ Ashley Black, a Biblical Studies major from Denham Springs, who began studying Hebrew online while in high school but knew she needed the right mentorship to advance in her understanding.

“I wanted to be able to study the Bible and the languages it was originally written in so that I could more accurately help people understand it,” Black said. “I didn’t come to LC primarily for a degree, but for an education, and that’s exactly what I got.”

■ Connor Headrick, a history major from Monroe, who will attend Tulane Law School in the fall and wants to specialize in defending religious liberties.

“This isn’t a call that ends today for us,” Headrick said. “It’s just beginning our lives’ work – our call to serve Christ and glorify Him in all we do. The Lord

made it very clear that Louisiana College was going to provide the foundation that I needed in order to fulfill my calling.”

■ Mark Klein, a convergence media major from Baton Rouge, who came to LC to compliment his part-time job opportunity at KALB-TV in Alexandria.

“That is how the Lord led me to LC, and here is the understatement of the year, thank the Lord He did,” Klein said. “LC took a kid in high school whose relationship with Christ was almost non-existent and made that the most important thing in his life.”

■ Finally, Kimberly Landry, a biology and chemistry major from Denham Springs, who will attend LSU Medical in Shreveport this fall in order to become a pediatrician.

“I’ve been privileged to study topics from the chemical and biological processes that keep us alive to the laws that govern the universe,” Landry said. “In every aspect of my studies, God’s design and order have been made evident. Many times, science is used to minimize faith. Here at LC, my studies have been a tool to grow my faith.”

“I know that Louisiana College was where God wanted me to be for the last four years. I have loved my time here, and I am honored to call this school my



Hannah Fleming photo

Graduates parade out of Guinn Auditorium following 2015 Spring Commencement ceremonies to applause from parents, family and well wishers. New LC President Rick Brewer bestowed degrees to 123 undergraduates and 24 masters students.

alma mater.”

Black, Headrick and Landry all graduated summa cum laude (4.0) and Klein magna cum laude.

The commencement ceremony was also an opportunity for the LC Board of Trustees and chairman Tommy French to present Argile Smith, who served as LC’s interim president until Brewer was hired, with a special commendation.

“We are deeply blessed by Dr. Smith’s friendship, exemplary service and immeasurable contributions in support of Christian higher education,” French said.

The Pledge from page 2

Orleans, said that once pastors understand that increasing their church’s Cooperative Program giving might in turn provide more funds to hire an additional Baptist Collegiate Ministry minister in their area or another area of ministry, that may increase the excitement level of that pastor.

“So those kind of specific goals of what we could do if we reach that goal could help the conversations with other pastors,” Gilbert said.

Mike Evans, pastor of Elwood Baptist Church in Forest Hill, said the best way to have success with the Pledge is through a one-to-one relationship.

“The best thing we can do is meet people and get out there,” Evans said. “The best times are still ahead.”

Horn noted he has been “humbled and blown away” by the positive response he has received from other pastors he has talked to about The Pledge.

“For years we’ve witnessed the commitment to cooperative missions and ministries deteriorate and at the same time, bemoaned the demise of our culture. It is time we pledge ourselves to do whatever we can do to reverse this trend,”

Horn continued. “Wouldn’t it be tremendous to see 300 churches or more collectively come and kneel before our Heavenly Father, put our hands and our pledges in His hands and publicly declare everything we have is at His disposal during the Monday evening session of this year’s Annual Meeting?” Horn asked. “I know I would.”

David Hankins, Executive Director of Louisiana Baptists echoed Horn’s sentiments.

“Thirty years ago eighteen cents of every dollar given through a local church went towards missions. Today that number is eleven cents” said Hankins. “We must reexamine our commitment to evangelism and missions if we’re going to see the impact we long to see.”

The Cooperative Program emphasis was one of the 10 KAIROS (Key Actions In Reaching Our State) outlined in the report of the Presidents 2020 Commission adopted by messengers during the 2013 meeting of the Louisiana Baptist Convention in Alexandria.

“There’s a lot to happen between now and 2020,” Horn said. “But it will be my heart’s desire to see the Vision 2020 get accomplished and we will continue

to talk about that.”

Pastors interested in receiving additional information regarding this initiative or in leading their church to take The Pledge, are encouraged to contact Horn, steve.horn@fbclaf.org. Please enter “The Pledge” in the subject line of the email.

More information regarding “The Pledge” will be available soon at www.ThePledgeLA.org.

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What's on my heart for SBC

COLUMBUS, Ohio (BP) – For 11 months, I have had one of the greatest privileges ever given to me by the Lord. Serving as president of the Southern Baptist Convention is one of the most humbling and overwhelming experiences in life and leadership.

With each day, while my burden deepens, my hope exceedingly rises. What an incredible moment God has given to each of us to live at this time in human history. In light of that, I want to share a few things on my heart about our upcoming SBC annual meeting.

COMING TOGETHER

Yes, coming together is on my heart. I pray we will come together in Columbus, Ohio, on June 16-17.



RONNIE FLOYD
President
Southern Baptist
Convention

I pray we will come together in unity. While our uniqueness and various perspectives express themselves at times, we do need to resolve: We will come together, stay together, and leave together as followers of our Lord in our Southern Baptist family.

I pray we will come together in Columbus with great expectation. This expectation does not need to be in men or programs, but in the Lord Himself. He is doing some mighty things among us and I pray when we are together, He will do some mighty things in us. Come expecting God to meet with us powerfully and send us out extraordinarily.

LOVING ONE ANOTHER

Loving one another is on my heart. As a people who love the Bible so much, we also need to love one another. I have attended at least 31 of our last 35 national Southern Baptist Convention annual meetings. At times, loving one another did not always seem to exist.

Now in the day of endless blogs, articles, emails and interviews, the tendency is to criticize more than love and to create suspicion more than trust.

We need to fall in love with Jesus again. When we do, we will love one another.

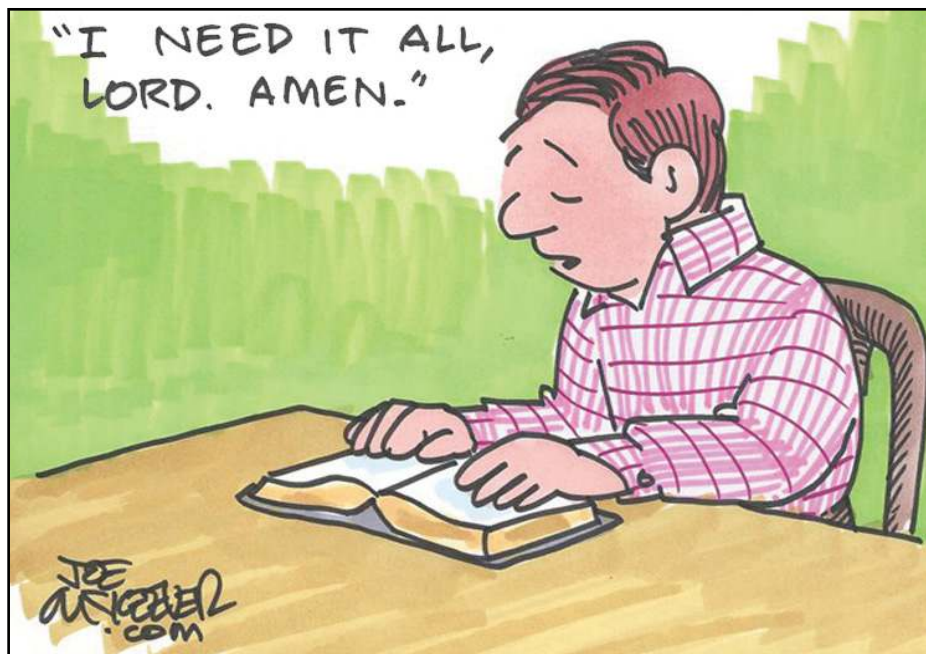
Jesus said, *"By this all people will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."* (John 13:35) Jesus said it is love that sets us apart from others. May this be said about us.

CELEBRATING TOGETHER

God is doing some wonderful things through our churches in the work we do together as Southern Baptists. We need to celebrate together what the Lord is doing.

Even in this critical time in our nation, more than ever, we need the joy of the Lord to be our strength. While sin is abounding in our nation, grace abounds even more. Yes, we need to celebrate together the great grace of our Lord.

Our sessions will be filled with some defining moments. Yet, God alone will create these moments we will never forget. These are moments that deserve our highest celebration together, offered to our Lord Jesus Christ.



Is any problem too big for God?

EL CAJON, Calif. (BP) – "Houston, we have a problem."

When NASA flight directors heard those words from Apollo 13, it was like an invitation: "You are hereby invited to solve a life-or-death problem" – and they did. Flight director Gene Kranz sprang into action: "Okay ... stay cool. Work the problem, people.... Failure is not an option!" (Excerpt from the movie, "Apollo 13.")

Work the problem! With no heat, no light and little communication with the ground, the astronauts drifted back toward earth in darkness – helpless.

Work the problem! Ground engineers had to conserve enough power to fire the engines and direct them safely into the earth's atmosphere. And they did!

LOST IN SPACE

Ever felt lost in space, drifting along, helpless, wondering if even God is stumped by your situation? We know God can solve problems, but in your darkest moments you wonder if He is even working on it.

Friend, He is!

Look at the Apollo 13 situation in a split-screen format: three astronauts on the left screen huddled in their freezing spacecraft, speaking little to conserve energy, fighting to stay awake, with only a flashlight – dark, cold, silent. On the right side of the screen, just the opposite, a beehive of brightly-lit problem-solving is taking place.

Given instructions that a plan was in the works, the astronauts had to be patient. They couldn't work the problem, so they had to believe someone else could.

That's exactly what we as Christians have to do when we have a problem with no solution in sight.

We can't work it but we have to believe that God can – and He is working on our behalf.

PROBLEM SOLVING IN THE IMAGE OF GOD

Sometimes, using the gifts and abilities God gives us, we can solve serious problems, as in the Apollo 13 mission.

But other times, we have to call upon

God. When we are stretched beyond our human limits, we find ourselves in His limitless domain. He welcomes our cries and loves to provide solutions.

When asking God to help us solve problems, we have to remember that His ways are not our ways (Isaiah 55:8-9). God provided "surprise solutions" to people facing problems in the Bible:



DAVID JEREMIAH
Pastor
Shadow Mountain
Community Church

■ Big problem, small solution. The Israelite army had a giant problem named Goliath. God's solution was a teenager about 3 feet shorter. No armor or sword, but David had giant faith: "The Lord does not save with sword and spear; for the battle is the Lord's, and He will give you into our hands" (1 Samuel 17:47). Sometimes God's solutions are smaller than our problems in order to create faith in us.

■ Physical problem, spiritual solution. Hindered in ministry by a physical problem, the apostle Paul called out to God three times for healing. Instead of bringing a physical one, God brought a spiritual one: *"My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness"* (2 Corinthians 12:9). God may allow a problem to be its own solution when it forces us to rely more on God for grace to endure.

■ Personal problem, corporate solution. When Paul was journeying toward Jerusalem to deliver relief monies to the church, he was well aware of the danger from opponents of the Gospel. He shared his personal problem with the church at Rome, asking them to pray for his safety: *"I beg you, brethren ... that you strive together with me in prayers to God for me, that I may be delivered from those in Judea who do not believe"* (Romans 15:30-31). God may want to use others to be a partial or total solution to your problem – but you have to ask.

The Bible, church history and hopefully your life are filled with examples of how God has solved problems His way, in His time, according to His purposes.

There is no problem too big for God. Be encouraged as you trust Him to get involved in whatever problem you are facing today.

Moral conviction and not popular opinion essential in democracy

A very successful political consultant in the Bay Area, who has helped elect a number of local officials, was recently arrested and charged with multiple counts of child pornography. At his arraignment, the evidence presented reportedly included some particularly heinous depictions of sexual acts involving children.

The political fallout has been dramatic and immediate. Former clients, particularly those now in office, have rushed to outdo themselves with denials of any and all relationship with their confidant. He is radioactive – political death to anyone associated with him.

While his purported actions are deplorable, watching politicians scramble to find the moral high ground on this issue has been frustrating at best, comical at worst. They are applying a double standard to his behavior which reveals the convoluted reasoning prevalent in making and enforcing laws these days.

In light of current reasoning, what legal defense should this alleged pedophile mount? How about these familiar arguments: "My sexual orientation makes me a protected class citizen; therefore, expressing it is my civil right. My sexual orientation is an inborn trait; therefore expressing it is my natural right. My sexual orientation cannot be regulated by the state. What happens in private is my business, not anyone else's."

Most people would scoff at these facetious arguments. They would cite children's lack of maturity enabling them to consent to sexual activity, their need to be protected from exploitive adults, the physical harm of sexual activity to children, and the illegality of such behavior in our culture. They would be right on all counts. These cultural mores and laws, however, have been based on the foundation of Judeo-Christian moral authority, upon which so much of our legal system rests (or at least rested in the past).

This moral foundation has been rejected in our culture. The new moral standard is what is culturally popular – and then made legal by legislative action or court decisions. We now define morality by what is legal and legality by what is popular. Polling has replaced principled discernment in national decision-making.

The conviction sexual activity involving children is wrong is not based on cultural disdain for it, but on timeless moral standards. Political leaders can't have it both ways. They should not change some laws to reflect current cultural mores and then claim some kind of moral authority to uphold others when it's expedient.

Governing by principle based on unchanging moral convictions – not popular opinion – is essential for democracy to survive. Let's hope we figure this out again before it's too late.



JEFF IORG
President
Golden Gate
Seminary, California

Hebron celebrates storied past in new surroundings

By MARK H. HUNTER

Regional Reporter

DENHAM SPRINGS – The oldest church in Livingston Parish just moved into a modern, spacious sanctuary that re-combined Hebron Baptist's two-service congregations.

The church, located just south of Denham Springs on Hwy. 16, also celebrated its 178th year with a May 3 homecoming service and, of course, dinner on the grounds – actually in the gym.

"I feel like we have one congregation again," said Joe Alain, senior pastor for the past nine years. "I kinda felt like I was pastoring two different churches. Now everything is together – which is a very

positive experience."

For the past several years, due mainly to space constraints, they had been holding two services, one traditional at 8 a.m., and a contemporary service at

10:30 a.m. Now they hold one service at 10 a.m. and they have "blended" the formats as well, Alain said.

"Our desire was to have the wisdom of our senior saints with the passion of our younger people," Alain said. "Wisdom and passion together is a pretty good combination."

Founded in 1837, the congregation has met in a log cabin, a larger log-frame building, and several brick buildings until their new, \$3 million,

25,000-square-foot sanctuary building was dedicated on March 22.



Hebron Baptist Church of Denham Springs senior Pastor Joe Alain and his wife Rhonda pose in the foyer of the church's new sanctuary.



Mark H. Hunter photo

Members leave the new sanctuary building of Hebron Baptist Church following their 178th homecoming service on May 3.

"We've been around a long time - but we don't have any charter members still living," Alain said with a laugh.

Church historian Mary Broussard, 72, has attended Hebron Baptist her entire life and has written extensively about it.

"We are the oldest church in Livingston Parish still in existence," Broussard said. "It was founded by eight members and their relatives still attend here. We have five Civil War veterans in the cemetery and their relatives still attend this church."

For homecoming, Broussard and their history team published a 30-page

booklet charting the deacons who have served over the decades and a few interesting stories.

In the early 1900's, according to one account, "Answered Prayer," no rain had fallen for four months and people were going hungry so church members called an all-day, July 4, prayer meeting. By late afternoon children playing outside reported hearing thunder, "but they went right on praying," the story goes. "A cloud moved in and everyone was drenched and they all left there singing

See **HEBRON** on 10

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Executive Order from page one

marriage is between one man and one woman," said Jindal. "We don't support discrimination in Louisiana and we do support religious liberty. These two values can be upheld at the same time.

"Indeed, we celebrate diversity of belief in Louisiana. Diversity of belief and religious liberty are the foundation of our law and Constitution and they should be protected. As long as I'm Governor, we will fight to protect religious liberty and not apologize for it," said Jindal.

The executive order means the 20 agencies that fall under the executive branch, including the Department of Revenue, Department of Insurance, Department of Transportation and Development and Department of Health and Hospitals, must abide by the rules set

forth in it.

The intent of bill (HB 707) was designed to block the government from pulling licenses, tax benefits, and the like from a company because of the owner's view of same-sex marriage. The sponsor of the legislation, State Rep. Mike Johnson, R-Bossier City, said Jindal's executive order reflects parts of an amended version of his bill.

"I applaud Gov. Jindal for this Executive Order. It will go a long way to preserve the most fundamental freedom of all Louisianians which is our religious liberty," said Johnson.

With the Supreme Court's imminent ruling on a landmark same-sex marriage case set for June 18, Johnson said he felt his legislation was necessary as there would be an increasing number of con-

flicts "between the old idea of religious freedom and new changing ideas about marriage."

"As was just mentioned a few weeks ago in oral arguments at the U.S. Supreme Court, it is incumbent upon every state to address this important issue as soon as possible," Johnson continued. "This is a good resolution for our state for now."

However, the House Civil Law and Procedure Committee did not agree and defeated the measure when legislators voted 10-2 to return the legislation to the calendar after hours of testimony from both sides including Louisiana Baptists' Executive Director David Hankins and Louisiana Family Forum's President Gene Mills.

"Thank you to all who signed the petition and supported the position statement put forth by me, Dr. (Steve) Horn, and Dr. (David) Goza," said Hankins. "While the hesitancy of our representatives is disappointing, I am thankful the governor signed an executive order which will provide protection for people of faith who live out their convictions."

Gene Mills, President of Louisiana Family Forum, said, "We are very disappointed in the fact Rep. Neil Abramson, D-New Orleans and chairman of the committee, did not even extend the courtesy of allowing Rep. Johnson to place his amendments on the bill.

"Rep. Johnson did everything possible to answer

the spectacular claims of the opponents and to make his bill clear and concise, but the chairman, aided by Rep. John Bel Edwards (D-Amite), motioned to return the bill to the calendar before the author could amend his bill," said Mills.

"By voting with the chairman today, the House Civil Law committee effectively ignored two-thirds of Louisiana voters, endorsing both the state's ability to discriminate and the LGBT advocacy groups. The website www.LA4Liberty.com has registered over 500 businesses and 1,000 citizens in Louisiana in support of the bill. These voices were ignored by today's committee vote," Mills concluded.

Louisiana Family Forum Vice President Rick Edmonds wrote in a statement, "We are so grateful for a victory today for marriage and family. We are equally grateful for a victory for Louisiana and all of America.

"We want to say thanks to you. While religious freedom in America is being attacked on every corner, believers like you in Louisiana continue to make a difference. Many of you have been praying, signing petitions, speaking to legislators, informing friends and even making your way to Baton Rouge to make a difference. Congratulations, your hard work and prayers have paid off," wrote Edmonds.

Equality Louisiana, an LGBT advocacy group, and Louisiana Progress Action issued a joint statement con-

demning Jindal's Executive Order saying it would only hurt the state's economy.

"It is shameful that Gov. Jindal has decided that abusing his executive power to accomplish the goals of House Bill 707, even after it was tabled indefinitely by our legislature today, is worth more effort than fixing our disastrous state budget. He may have forgotten what every day Louisianians value the most, but the testimony today against HB 707 should have reminded him. Discrimination is not a Louisiana value."

However, a poll taken by Louisiana Family Forum on May 14 and May 17 indicated that a majority of voters in Louisiana supported the Louisiana Marriage and Conscience act by a margin of over two to one (67 to 25 percent).

Moreover, voters from nearly all key demographic groups in Louisiana overwhelmingly supported the Louisiana Marriage and Conscience Act.

In 2004, 78 percent of Louisianians amended the constitution to affirm traditional marriage.

However, officials from both the Louisiana tourism and business industry strongly opposed the bill according to a story in the *New Orleans Times-Picayune*.

In testifying against the bill, New Orleans Convention and Visitors Bureau CEO Stephen Perry called it "a radioactive, poisonous message for

See **EXECUTIVE ORDER** on 11

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LBCH trustees updated on foster care ministry, construction projects

BY BRIAN BLACKWELL
Message Staff Writer

MONROE – Just four years ago, two children were in the care of foster care families associated with the Louisiana Baptist Children's Home.

While the Children's Home is grateful for the impact those families made on the lives of the children in their care, Children's Home staff wanted to do more – much more – to expand their reach of foster care homes for Christ.

The goal, according to President and CEO Perry Hancock, was to one day greatly increase that number to surpass that of the children in residence at its main campus in Monroe.

Today, after much prayer and increased efforts to bring awareness to that ministry, more than 100 children are receiving care from foster families associated with the Children's Home. Hancock calls that nothing short of a miracle.

"We are so excited about the response from our churches and families," Hancock told trustees during their recent meeting. "Many are now answering the call to foster and adoption ministry."

At the heart of its increase in foster care awareness is Connect 1:27, a network that assists churches with

the development of foster and adoption ministries and works with Christian families interested in serving as foster and adoptive parents. Connect 1:27 offers online resources, monthly e-newsletters, toolkits designed as ministry guides and conferences that both inform prospective foster care and adoptive parents and trains those currently serving in that capacity.

Connect 1:27 is based on God's command of James 1:27 – Religion that our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this; to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world." Hancock says, "Foster care children are modern-day orphans." Hancock sees a trend where churches and couples view foster care as a ministry opportunity. "Christian families nationwide are hearing and answering the call to foster and adoption ministry," Hancock said. "When a church starts providing a foster care and adoption support group, unchurched couples will come to the church for that support. The support group then serves as the portal through which the unchurched couple become involved and integrated into the church."

Anyone interested in joining the Connect 1:27 Network can visit connect127.org or contact Beth Green at

318.343.2244 or beth@lbch.org.

In other action at the trustee meeting, Hancock updated the trustees on construction projects that soon will take place on its campus. Faith Cottage will receive new flooring, an updated kitchen and the elimination of paneling inside the home. Once complete, all eight of its cottages, which serve as a home for five to seven children and two houseparents, will have received renovations.

Grace and Fezell cottages were the first to receive renovations in 2013. Since then, Joy, Rucker, Love, Hope and Peace have also received updates. Renovations to Faith Cottage are expected to begin in early June, with a targeted completion of August.

In addition to renovations to Faith Cottage, two additional construction projects should begin in early June. One is the first of three cottages for children and their mothers transitioning from a homeless lifestyle to one of job readiness. The cottages in Martin Village will provide a place to stay for the homeless women and their children for up to one year at no cost to the residents. While there, the women receive a high school equivalency degree and life and employment skills training through the Christian Women Job Corps. The first

new cottage is expected to be complete by late 2015.

Two additional cottages are expected to be built in the near future, as funds come in from the proceeds of the Roy O Martin, Brenda Hall Abney Golf Tournament, which provides funding for the new HomePlace cottages.

A second project, to begin in June, is the construction

of four apartments designed to provide extended transitional living for those families who need additional time to prepare for independent living.

While construction on the two projects takes place, a temporary road will be built to minimize traffic disruptions at the Children's Home main entrance.

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District 8 Director of Missions
Lee Dickson announces his approaching retirement.

After 38 years as DOM/Ministries Coordinator, Brother Lee has decided to step down effective Oct. 1, 2015, which would be his 72nd birthday.



Anyone desiring to apply for the position of Ministries Coordinator/Director of Missions should send a resume' by June 30 to

DOM SEARCH COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN
C/O First Baptist Church
508 Second St. • Natchitoches, LA 71457
or email to Tommy Rush at trush@fbcnatchitoches.net

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His power, and the wonders He has done."
Psalm 78:4*

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Citizenship from page one

"I'm thankful to God I'm a US citizen," Us said. "I'm blessed. I think it's the will of God that he brought me here to this place."

Us is not the only person in his family who is an American citizen. His son, Arturo Jr., and his daughter both received their citizenship. His daughter is his organist and his son is pastor of El Alfa Y La Spanish in Leesville.

Both Us and his son participated in a citizenship ceremony on May 13 in Alexandria.

"I'm blessed to be an American," said Arturo Jr. "It's not easy to get citizenship and this is a big blessing in our lives. God brings blessings and this is part of it."

Others in his family are either nearing their citizenship or just beginning the process of learning English so one day they can apply to be a citizen. His son, Rueben, is pastor of Emmanuel Hispanic Baptist Church in DeRidder and is applying to become a citizen in November. Us' wife, Isabel, is still learning English and hopes to one day become a citizen as well.

Us' journey to America and pastor of El Aposento Alto Baptist Church in Florien began at a time when he believed he didn't need God in his life.

The year was 1985.

Us was enjoying a life of partying and luxury when his wife, Isabel, accepted Christ into her life. However, whenever Us was exposed to the gospel, he responded that he had plenty of money and didn't need God.

Then, one evening, everything changed.

While driving around town in his car, Us hit a taxi and was sent to jail on charges of driving while intoxicated.

"I said Lord where are you because I need you," Us

recalls. "One thing I had heard is that when you have troubles, it's time to ask God for help. He showed me His mercy and I was set free."

Once he was released from jail, Us made his decision public on Oct. 20, 1985. Immediately, this once committed partier was now a committed follower of Christ.

For the next year, Us grew in his faith while serving as a Sunday school teacher. Through this experience, Us felt called by God to go and plant a church in his home of Mereda on the Yucatan Peninsula.

The church started in Us' home, with his family and some neighbors. For the next 16 years, he continued to preach the gospel, plant churches and see lost souls saved.

While he was encouraged to see many people accept Christ and be a part of new church starts, Us felt the Lord leading him to move out of his comfort zone and into God's call for him to move to America, through learning of the need for a Spanish church in Florien after meeting a missions team from that area who had traveled to his city.

At first, Us' wife did not want to move to America. A second time Us asked, she passed on the opportunity. But on the third time, after hearing Us preach on the need to leave everything behind and follow

Christ, she agreed to follow's God's leading.

And on April 29, 2002, they moved to America for their new journey.

He arrived on a Monday and Us was instructed that the next Sunday, he would lead his first church service.

"I asked where are the people and was told you will go get them," Us said. "I got families quickly in the week before the first service on May 5. People are looking for a church and this was the only Spanish church we had in the area. They are looking to hear something they can understand."

The first Sunday, he started with nine people. And the following Sunday, 15 people came.

And that trend continued to this day, with an average of 45 coming on Sundays. Most of those attending his church are only in America for a limited time, since they must return to Mexico or another country once their Visa expires.

In addition to pastoring the church in Florien that holds services on Sunday mornings, he also serves as pastor of a mission that meets at the District 8 Association office in Natchitoches. Started in 2013, the church was begun so people who worked in the morning could attend the services, which take place at night. Average

attendance is 30.

El Aposento Alto Baptist Church is the only constituted Hispanic Baptist church that is a member of the District 8 Baptist Association, according to Ron Thompson, assistant to the coordinator of missions and ministries. Thompson said from what he has observed, Us has bountiful energy and works hard to train both congregations at Florien and Natchitoches to be missionaries.

"It is unbelievable how much energy he has and he never stops," Thompson said. "He's always on the go and doing things to increase the ministry."

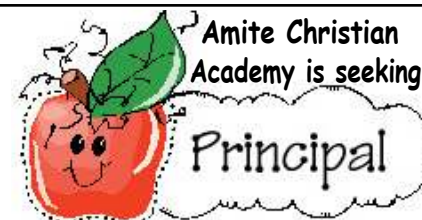
"He has a transient congregation, yet makes an impact," he continued. "His attitude

is he is sending missionaries out when they leave. He takes everyone in when he can, loves them, shares the gospel and truly develops disciples."

Since he started as pastor, Us has baptized around 500 people. He calls what God has done amazing, despite challenges he faces.

"It's hard to be pastor in America," Us said. "Our members do not live close to the church; they are living far away. Sometimes I get a call at midnight saying preacher someone gave you our phone number and ask for translator. Or I travel 75 miles to visit someone to come to church on Sunday or who need counseling. It's harder than Mexico but I love to do it."

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Hebron from page 5

God's praises. No one complained about getting wet." Located on 17 acres of what was once rural land, Hebron Baptist is now surrounded by suburbs thanks to explosive growth provoked by Hurricane Katrina.

"It is a really unique church because the area is growing so fast – it used to be rural but now it's pretty much has a suburban feel to it with new subdivisions," Alain said. Average attendance is 350 to 400 and they average about 25 baptisms a year, he said.

"Growth has been steady," Alain said. "We've had lots of new folks from surrounding subdivisions joining."

The new building was designed to be very open and welcoming, Alain said. Sunlight floods into the foyer through tall windows and the open space includes couches and chairs, a visitor's welcome counter and nearby "Gospel Grounds" coffee shop.

On one side of the 700 seat sanctuary is a secure children's ministry wing and on the other side is a row of classrooms for the elementary youth. The floor is flat, the interlocking chairs are comfortable, the acoustics are wonderful and the large stage includes twin, large screens for video presentations.

The church has so much going on during the week the bulletin has to be printed on 11x17 sheets of paper. For example, food pantry and clothes

closet ministries are "exploding," Alain said.

"Our goal is to reach into the community as much as possible realizing you can't just build a building and expect them to come in," Alain said. "So many families in our community don't attend anywhere."

Phil Ortego, 55, pastor of Scotts Hills Baptist Church in Wilmington, N.C., for the past 21 years, was the homecoming preacher.

"I got saved in this church when I was a senior in high school," Ortego said. He grew up as a Catholic. "Before I came here I was really abusing drugs and alcohol - my life was just a mess."

"A friend from this church invited me to come hear the One Way Singers youth choir on a Thursday night ... there were some good looking girls in the choir - so I came for the girls," Ortego said with a grin. "But that night I met Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior and he transformed my life radically from that point on."

"I'm kinda like the boy who moved away and gets to come back to share in the abundance of the ministry God has brought here," Ortego said. "God has had His hand on this church for 178 years. The best days are not behind this church but the best years for this church are still ahead."

On the internet: www.hbcdenham.org

LOUISIANA NOTABLES

ON THE MOVE

- **Michael Devillier** resigned as pastor at Downsville Baptist Church
- **Josh Cagle** new as pastor at Red River Baptist Church, Benton.
- **Harold Ashcraft** new as music minister at Emmanuel Baptist Church, Shreveport.
- **Ed Baswell** resigned as pastor at Clarion Baptist Church, Elm Grove.
- **Elijah Teh-Teh** resigned as pastor at New Zion Baptist Church, Bossier City.
- **R. C. (wife Lilly) Flournoy** new as associate pastor at Cornerstone Baptist Church, Shreveport.
- **Daniel Faulkner** new as minister of students at Brookwood Baptist Church, Shreveport.

HOMEcoming

- Holloway Baptist Church, Deville: **Homecoming Celebration**, June 7, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m. with dinner on the grounds to follow. Speaker: **Frank Shields** (former pastor). Music: **Melody Slocum**. Pastor: Jack West.
- First Baptist Church, Vidalia: **Celebration Sunday**, June 7, 10:30 p.m. Speaker: **Dan Glenn**. There will be a potluck meal after the service. Pastor: Bill McCullin.
- Salem Baptist Church, Plain Dealing: **Homecoming Celebration**, June 12, Speaker: **Don McCormick**. Dinner on the grounds following services. **The Palmer Family** in concert at 1:30 p.m. Pastor: Eddy Taylor.

LAGNIAPPE

- **Susan Sanson**, 67, a member of Metairie Baptist Church and an International Mission Board missionary, died unexpectedly on May 18 from malaria in Zomba, Malawi. Susan developed a sudden onset of malaria and treatment was begun immediately. However, early the next morning her husband Billy woke to find her unresponsive. He rushed her to the hospital, but she passed away as medical staff were examining her. Her husband Billy is a chaplain and university minister at Chancellor College in Zomba. Funeral arrangements are pending.
- Satsuma Baptist Church, Livingston: **"Hometown Nazareth" VBS**, June 1-5, 5:30-8 p.m. Pastor: Brad Delaughter.
- Safehaven Bible Church, Lake Charles: **Dedication Service**, June 6, 11 a.m. Speaker: **Fred Luter**. Meet & Greet: Food, fun and fellowship, 2-5 p.m.; **First worship service**, June 7, 9:30 a.m. For more information, call 337-502-8074 or e-mail at safehavenlakecharles@gmail.com. Pastor: Kedrick D. Holiday, Sr.

- Elwood Baptist Church, Forest Hill: **Louisiana College President Rick Brewer** will bring the Gospel message in both music and preaching of the Word for Sunday service, June 7, 10:30 a.m. A meal and fellowship will follow. All are invited to attend. Pastor: Mike Evans.
- Trees Baptist Church, Vivian: **Finding Favour in Concert**, June 7, 10:45 a.m. A love offering will be taken. Pastor: Mark Crook.
- Ouachita Baptist Church, West Monroe: **Mega Sports Camp**, June 8-12, 6-8 p.m. for ages 3 years old thru the sixth grade. Sports to choose from include flag football, baseball, basketball, soccer and cheerleading. All children, 3-years-olds thru kindergarten, will play kickball. Pre-game kickoff/registration will be June 6 from 10-11:30 a.m. For more information, call the church office at 318.387.6372. Pastor: Dennis R. Hensley, Jr.
- Airline Baptist Church, Bossier City: **Airline Baptist Children's Ministry presents 'Down by the Creek Bank'**, June 12-13, 6:30 p.m. Cost: \$10. Please contact the church office at 318.746.3495 to purchase tickets.
- Cypress Baptist Church, Natchitoches: **Palmer Family of Farmer-ville in concert**, June 13, 6 p.m. A fellowship will follow the concert. Pastor: Billy Shugart.
- Holloway Baptist Church, Deville: **VBS**, June 14 – 18. For more information call 318.466.3180. Pastor: Jack West.
- First Baptist Church, DeRidder: **Infinity Sports Camp**, June 15-19, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. The camp will offer basketball, volleyball, soccer, baseball, cheerleading, flag football and softball for kindergarten through sixth grade. Cost: \$135. For more information call the church office at 337.463.9047. Pastor: Lindsey Burns.
- Hebron Baptist Church, Denham Springs: **Worship Arts Camp**, June 15-19. Cost: \$35. Register online at www.hbcdenham.org, call 225.665.6278 or at the Welcome Center. **The Perrys in concert**, June 18, 7 p.m. A love offering will be received. Pastor: Joe Alain.
- **The National Campers on Mission Rally** will be held at Tom Johnsons Rally Park, Marion, N.C., June 16-18. Campers on Mission is an organization of evangelical Christians who own RV equipment and participate in various mission projects across the United States. The program will include Christian comedians, Gospel singing groups, seminars and inspirational speakers. A registration form may be found at campersonmission.org. For additional information contact Jeb41938@gmail.com.
- Summer Grove Baptist Church, Shreveport: **Chonda Pierce It's a Girl Thing**, June 19, 7 p.m. Cost: Group of 10 or more, \$18, General Admission, \$22, Gold Circle, \$28 and VIP, \$50. For more information call the church office at 318.686.1470. Pastor: Aaron Burgner.

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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.

jt vchv vcl ahil ta h phg fhj vtfhun vcl whep vull tg

vcl tgl jqnl, hgn vcl ahil ta h otzgr eqtg vtfhun vcl

whep vull tg vcl tvclu jqnl: qv fhj phnl vcutzrc hee vcl

ctzjl utzgn hstzv.

ldlyqle atuvo-tgl:ggglvllg

Clues:
A = F; T = O

Answer to May 21, Scripture Crypto:
First Corinthians six: four

Message Classified Ads

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Executive Order from page 6

(tourism).”
“The state could lose millions – up to \$65 million a year – in state tax revenue because of lost business as a result the bill and perceptions that it is discriminatory,” Perry said. “Let’s not create discriminatory elements in the marketplace that destroy our economy.”
Johnson, though, was

skeptical about Perry’s loss projections.
“Those numbers are unsubstantiated,” he said. “So much of this is based on mischaracterization of the bill.”
Perry said the state could lose out on bids for Super Bowls, the final four and national championships because of the perception of

the legislation.
“Companies feel it would make it harder to recruit workers to Louisiana,” Greater New Orleans Inc. CEO Michael Heck said during the hearing.
Louisiana Baptist Convention President Steve Horn said in recent days he has been holding to Proverbs 24:10, which states If you do nothing in a difficult time, your strength is limited.
“As we await a decision by the Supreme Court in just a few weeks now, I am thankful for leadership in our state that would have the courage to do something in a difficult time,” said Horn, pastor of First Baptist Church in Lafayette. “I fear that once again we have al-

lowed the minority position to speak for the majority. Instead of continuing to have an honest debate about a matter that is going to define our culture, the Committee’s decision yesterday disallows the debate to continue.”
Johnson said he plans to reintroduce the bill during next year’s legislative session.
“All of this effort has been about one simple thing – the need to preserve the most fundamental of all human rights, which is our right of conscience and the freedom of belief,” Johnson said. “Everyone in our society deserves dignity and respect, but part of that is upholding the right of people to adhere to their faith.”

SEEKING FULL TIME
SOCIAL WORKERS

Louisiana Baptist Children's Homes is seeking full time social workers for the Alexandria and Baton Rouge areas.

The ideal candidate must possess a MSW, have previous child-welfare experience, be an active member of a Southern Baptist Church, and be committed to serving God by ministering to children and families through foster care and adoption services.

If interested, please submit a resume to beth@lbch.org or send to **Louisiana Baptist Children's Home, P.O. Box 4196, Monroe, LA 71211.**



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Message unveils more user-friendly, redesigned website

BY BRIAN BLACKWELL
Message Staff Writer

ALEXANDRIA – Continuing efforts to improve its footprint on the Internet, the *Baptist Message* launched a redesigned website June 4 offering a variety of features making baptistmessage.com easier to navigate and a better complement to Louisiana Baptists' newspaper.

"The digital redesign is a great improvement, incorporating new features that make the online *Baptist Message* a better partner for the print edition," said Will Hall, who recently joined the newsjournal as editor.

"But also, it reflects well on the professionalism and commitment of the news staff for completing such a large change effort while in the midst of a leadership transition," said Hall. "It's exciting to be joining this

Baptist Message team."

The new features include a more user-friendly presentation of articles, a PDF version of the print edition and an improved archives section that allows searching for articles by descending order of date whether published in print or online.

Video clips may be added to articles, and users may now comment on reports and easily share stories through social media links such as Twitter and Facebook.

The new website also



offers new advertising possibilities.

Churches, businesses and others can take advantage of a pop-up ad option on the website and benefit from reduced prices when they advertise in both print and online.

Craig Beeman, a *Baptist Message* trustee and pastor at First Baptist Church in Winnsboro, said he is especially excited about the

improved archives section and said with each revision the website keeps getting better and better.

"In the times in which we live,

a business, ministry or even a church does not exist if it has no web presence," said Beeman, who in December becomes the next chairman of the *Baptist Message* board of trustees. "As the *Baptist Message* continues to reach out through the Internet, its reach will span much further than any print subscription could. I am excited for the future of the paper.

"In our day and age of getting to news quickly, the new website for Louisiana *Baptist Message* subscribers will certainly allow one to find the Baptist news they wish to find in a quick, clean and refreshed way," he added. "I am excited for subscribers to see what awaits them on the website."

Access to the website is included in the cost of a print subscription.

Users who already have a password do not need to request a new one.

Those with a paid print subscription who do not possess a username and password need only contact the *Baptist Message* office to get a password.

For more information on the new website, subscription options or advertising services, visit baptistmessage.com or call 318.442.7728.



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