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Rodney Taylor is retiring from Natalbany Baptist Church Aug. 12 after 41 years as its pastor. He has baptized more than 700 people during his time as pastor of the church.

Photo by Brian Blackwell



Rodney Taylor wrapping up 41 years at Natalbany, but still winning souls

By Brian Blackwell
Message Staff Writer

NATALBANY – Rodney Taylor is closing 41 years of service at Natalbany Baptist Church, but he has not stopped pushing to win more souls.

During the final day of VBS in mid-June, Taylor presented the plan of salvation to more than 100 children and youth, patiently waiting as 15 new converts, one-by-one, stepped forward to publicly declare faith in Jesus.

These students are among more than 700 new believers who committed their lives to Christ and were baptized during Taylor's ministry at

Natalbany.

"I was praising the Lord for the fact that the teachers had done such a wonderful job of teaching them," Taylor said. "My part at the altar with them on Wednesday night was just the culmination of what had been going on each night here in the different classes. It was easy for me to just go over and review the plan of salvation and then to give them the opportunity to make that public decision to say 'I'm not ashamed of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, for I know it's the power of God unto salvation.'"

See TAYLOR, page 8



Submitted photo

Natalbany Baptist Pastor Rodney Taylor prepares to baptize Abigail McCall, one of 15 who stepped forward after a VBS in June.

LA Baptists encouraged to 'think big' about GBO

By Brian Blackwell
Message Staff Writer

ALEXANDRIA – John Hebert wants Louisiana Baptists to think big about how their gifts to the Georgia Barnette State Missions Offering can lead to a great harvest of lost souls in the state.

"I can't emphasize enough the important role the Louisiana Baptist state missions offering has on furthering the Kingdom in the state," said Hebert, state missions and ministries director for Louisiana Baptists. "Without the strong support of our churches through this offering, we don't have a missions program to the level it is today. I'd hate to imagine what life would be like without it."

-- Without the offering, homeowners in Connecticut last May who were saved because of a Louisiana Disaster Relief chainsaw team response may never have heard the Gospel.

-- Without the offering, the Baptist Builders may not have been able to assist 10 mission churches in 2017 with planning, building or remodeling facilities.

-- Without the offering, Louisiana Baptists might not have planted 223

See GBO, page 2

Immigrant pastor hopes to 'see green' soon

By Brian Blackwell
Message Staff Writer

MADISONVILLE –Romanian Andrei Parvu and American Ethan Todd have grown in their individual faith in God and in their friendship with each other as they have faced hardships from the red tape encountered in attempting to obtain governmental approval for Parvu to serve as pastor of the First Baptist Church in Madisonville.

"It's been hard, especially at the beginning," said Parvu, who has briefly transitioned from pastor to volunteer

See IMMIGRANT, page 7



Brian Blackwell photo

Andrei Parvu (left) and Ethan Todd have developed a close friendship since the two became associated with First Baptist Church in Madisonville. Todd has spent months trying to help Parvu obtain the necessary documentation to legally serve as pastor of the church.

2 Georgia Barnette State Missions Offering

GBO from page one

new churches since 2010 and would not have witnessed 12,491 new commitments to Christ, and 3,293 baptisms.

-- Without the offering, the CENLAPregnancy Center in Alexandria would not have benefited from a grant to help purchase start-up materials and supplies that resulted in serving more than 100 families since it opened in December.

-- Without the offering, 53 students would not have received a Woman's Missionary Union Scholarship to Louisiana College for 2017-2018.

-- Without the offering, participants in the Girls Mission Camp and Missions Jamboree may not have heard the Gospel last year. Six made professions of faith in Christ at the Girls Mission Camp and 16 made decisions to follow Christ at Missions Jamboree.

-- Finally, without the offering, hundreds of people would not have viewed an online Gospel presentation through the "Here For You" multi-platform media strategy designed to give every person in Louisiana the opportunity to say "yes" to Jesus.

While the ability to do

missions in the state would be more difficult without the Georgia Barnette State Missions Offering, the good news is every year Louisiana Baptists step up and faithfully give to support missions and ministries throughout the state. This year's offering goal is \$1.7 million.

"Think Big" is the theme for this year's offering, based off 2 Corinthians 9:6.

"The missions offering makes it all possible," Hebert said. "Of course the Holy Spirit is the prime mover in our work, but the support of these missionaries, church planters and other Louisiana Baptist ministries is dependent on the money received from the state missions offering."

"We know God does it all," he said. "But we benefit in many ways by giving our money to help Him accomplish Kingdom work of Louisiana Baptist ministries."

LASTING LEGACY

The Georgia Barnette State Missions offering is named after the first elected and paid Woman's Missionary Union executive director/treasurer in the state. She would travel by boat, pirogue, horse and buggy and train from her home in New Orleans to other areas of Louisiana to visit state missionaries who were planting churches.

Because of generous giving to the state missions offering, Louisiana Baptists are able to continue the vision of Georgia Barnette more than 110 years after she first led women to begin taking up an offering for state missionaries in 1907. The offering was named after her in 1937.

Sept. 16-23 has been set aside as the Week of Prayer for State Missions.

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.

Lane Corley, church planting strategist for Louisiana Baptists, published a blog in late July highlighting some of the ministries that have received funds from last year's

Georgia Barnette State Missions Offering. According to Corley, through the first five months of 2018, money dispersed from the 2017 offering has provided:

- \$157,000 in church planting and compassion ministry funding for more than 100 projects
- \$37,000 in funding for the Baptist Mission Builder program providing construction resources for churches across Louisiana
- \$18,000 for church planting, networking and training for non-English language groups in Louisiana
- \$29,000 for men's, women's and kids' missions training and networking
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- \$85,000 for collegiate ministry
- \$30,000 for the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary Extension at Angola State Penitentiary
- \$9,000 for ESL (English as a Second Language), multi-housing and chaplaincy training projects across Louisiana
- \$3,000 for Crisis Pregnancy Resource Centers across Louisiana
- \$12,000 for Disaster Relief training and mobilization

See GBO, page 6

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Volume 133 August 9, 2018 Number 16

Forced abortion advertising is not informed consent

By Jeff Landry
Louisiana Attorney General

EDITOR'S NOTE: Attorney General Jeff Landry has been a faithful ally of Louisiana Baptists and members of other faith communities on religious liberty matters and pro-life issues, as well as other moral concerns. He felt strongly about the recently decided U.S. Supreme Court case of *National Institute of Family and Life Advocates v. Berry*. This was a case in which he joined 22 other attorneys general to successfully urge the overturning of an onerous California law that compelled Christian-run pregnancy care centers to promote state-provided abortions. He subsequently wrote an editorial which he has shared with the Baptist Message.

Since the Supreme Court legalized abortion on demand in 1973, Louisiana has consistently led the way in passing legislation to protect mothers and the innocent human lives in their wombs. In fact, we are one of only four states with a "trigger law" that would ban abortion immediately if *Roe v. Wade* were to be overturned.

Louisiana also requires abortion clinics to follow common-sense health and safety regulations, and we mandate inspections there to ensure women are not being put at further health risks. Additionally, our State limits the use of inhumane procedures, late-term abortions, and selective abortions.

What's more: Louisiana has some of the most comprehensive informed consent requirements in the nation – ensuring that every woman, before undergoing an abortion, is empowered with all the facts (including the possible

harm she faces). For example: our ultrasound law informs the mother that human life is growing within her, details the stage of her baby's development, and makes clear abortion would end this human life.

Moreover, our informed consent laws promote a fuller understanding of the abortion procedure and the violence it does to a growing baby with a beating heart. The laws also ensure women are educated on abortions' potential health risks – including a punctured uterus or scarring that can impact later pregnancies, hemorrhage, and sepsis. These requirements are clearly related to the abortion procedure itself, and they promote the State's interest in protecting women's health and well-being.

As Louisiana's chief legal officer, I defend our laws every time the abortion industry challenges them in court. And recently, I joined a coalition of 22 other state Attorneys General to help defend the free speech rights of pro-life pregnancy centers in *NIFLA v. Becerra*. In this case, California was forcing pro-life pregnancy centers to inform the very women they were attempting to help choose life that the state would pay for their abortions instead.

The goal of California was not to protect women; but to force pro-life counseling centers and their volunteers and staff to provide mothers with information on life-ending medical procedures that the clinics not only do not

perform but also to which they have serious moral, ethical, and religious objections.

The case made it all the way to the United States Supreme Court. In a 5-4 decision, the Court upheld the First Amendment rights of these centers. In doing so, it agreed with a very important distinction that we raised in our amicus brief: a law forcing pro-life centers to advertise for abortions is not the same as a law requiring informed consent.

When one enters into a doctor-patient relationship and seeks a medical service, an informed consent requirement for that specific service is triggered. This important part of any medical procedure is designed to ensure a patient is fully informed of the risks involved. Forcing religious-based pro-life pregnancy centers (most of whom perform limited services like distributing free self-

administered pregnancy tests, offering access to ultrasounds, and providing counseling) to inform women of where they can get free abortions has nothing to do with educating them of any risks posed by pregnancy tests or ultrasounds. Rather, it is a violation of their right to be free from government-compelled speech that infringes upon the very religious beliefs motivating them to offer these services in the first place.

Justice Clarence Thomas reaffirmed in his majority opinion in *NIFLA* that informed consent is an important part of consenting to an abortion. And he pointed out the very distinction our brief made, when he opined: "The notice does not facilitate informed consent to a medical procedure. In fact, it is not tied to a procedure at all. It applies to all interactions between a covered facility and its clients, regardless of whether a medical

procedure is ever sought, offered, or performed. If a covered facility does provide medical procedures, the notice provides no information about the risks or benefits of those procedures."

Louisiana law promotes mothers choosing life and provides/reaffirms the importance of informed consent when women make this life-altering decision. My office and I will continue to defend these statutes and work toward empowering women with the truth about abortion and its consequences. We will also continue to defend the rights of religious organizations and individuals to be free of government interference with the free exercise of their beliefs.

I will never abandon these fights.

Jeff Landry is the Attorney General of Louisiana. You can follow him on Twitter at @AGJeffLandry

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Mortician discovers Life in Belarus

By Will Hall
Message Editor

MINSK, Belarus (LBM) – Albert and Olga Melnichuck are typical Belarusians in their experiences with the deep despair that grips the people of this former republic of the former Soviet Union, but also in their life-changing transformation after encountering the Gospel.

The middle-aged Belokonevs were caught in an ever tightening downward spiral in life, according to Andrew Ryzhkov, founder of the Byelorussian Mission ministry, who told their story to the *Baptist Message*.

“He was a drunk because of a stressful job, always dealing with death, and the economy went down,” Ryzhkov described. “His wife was constantly complaining and their marriage was falling apart.

“But in the midst of all this turmoil, they came to the local church during our team’s most recent visit, and received Bibles we were distributing [Good and Evil Illustrated Bible], and they became curious,” he observed.

Ryzhkov said the couple reached out to him and his wife, Inna, and asked to meet at a coffee shop to answer their questions.

“We began meeting them, and they were asking about some of the things they were reading in their Bibles. We explained

the stories and shared how these pointed to Christ, and we shared about Him,” Ryzhkov said, describing the couple’s growing eagerness as they continued to get together for coffee or tea and to talk.

“The wife was born again, first,” Ryzhkov shared, “then the husband. We learned after returning to the United States that the youngest of their three boys, the two oldest in high school, is now a Christian, too.”

BIBLE AS EVANGELISM TOOL

Jeff Ingram, adult ministry strategist for Louisiana Baptists, and one of the leaders of the Belarus ministry effort, said the story of the Belokonevs reflects the openness among Belarusians to the hope represented in the Gospel.

Ingram also made particular mention of the Good and Evil Illustrated Bible, published in a graphic novel format (comic strip panels), as an effective evangelism tool.

“This Bible has had a tremendous impact in sharing the Gospel with Belarusians,” he said. “Four in 10, or nearly 43 percent, of those who receive one, surrender their hearts and lives to Christ.”

Ryzhkov said Louisiana Baptists can make a difference in Belarus by donating these Bibles, at \$10 per copy, or participating in one of several ministry in-country

efforts this fall.

“There will be a regular trip, September 11-20, to conduct evangelism with local churches; a construction project, September 10-20, to help build chapels for congregations; a business conference, September 16-25, to train business leaders in leadership and management and share Christ; and, a conference, September 21-22, to strengthen families in the church and in the community.”

“We have heard from people with the International Mission Board that there is more openness to the Spirit of God among Belarusians than they have witnessed in the last 15 years,” he said. “Louisiana Baptists enjoy a special relationship with the pastors and congregations in this heavily atheistic and agnostic country.

“More and more people are coming to Christ and church membership is increasing,” he said. “Eight years of distributing the Bible is working to soften the hearts of the people and to help the evangelicals there to better understand the Gospel. I think God is preparing the country for some type of revival in the near future.

Ingram told the *Baptist Message* that Louisiana Baptists can help by donating just one Bible or one copy of “Experiencing God,” the popular Henry Blackaby study that has been translated into Russian. But he also emphasized there is still



Albert and Olga Melnichuck are among many new converts to Christ resulting from the ongoing evangelistic efforts of Louisiana Baptists in Belarus.

time to join one of the mission efforts planned for this fall.

“I’m going September 10,” Ingram declared. “We can still sign up people who are willing to go and disciple pastors and to teach church members how to use the literature to reach the lost.

Donate copies of the Good and Evil Illustrated Bible via ByelorussianMission.org. Fall events are listed on ByelorussianMission.org/calendar. Learn how to participate in one of these mission efforts by email to TommyMiddleton@BAGBR.org.

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Unity leads to spiritual growth for black, white congregations

By Brian Blackwell
Message Staff Writer

BATON ROUGE – Manuel Pigeo boldly prayed in 2015, asking God to lead United Believers Baptist Church to a rebirth at a new property.

After three years of fasting and praying, God presented the steadily growing African-American congregation with the opportunity to move into a facility utilized by Oakcrest Baptist Church, a predominantly Anglo congregation, whose Sunday morning worship attendance was in steady

decline.

Since United Believers Baptist Church said, “Yes,” in January to sharing the campus, the congregation has seen God move in more ways than they ever imagined.

“When I became pastor of the church, I said to them I want you to know I am praying God would do something no one could take credit for -- that God would get the glory,” he said. “The way He opened the door and solidified this partnership has generated a great spirit of joy and peace. We are overwhelmed by God’s grace.”

BACKGROUND

United Believers Baptist Church was formed after Hurricane Katrina forced Franklin Avenue Baptist Church in New Orleans to meet at three separate locations, including the Baton Rouge campus.

Within a year, many members of the Franklin Avenue congregation returned to New Orleans, but a remnant of around 100 stayed behind, growing to 136 in 2017.

In 2011, Pigeo was called as pastor of the church, which was still a campus of Franklin Avenue.

Four years later, on April 15, 2015, the congregation voted to rename itself United Believers Baptist Church, adopting Psalm 133:1 as its mission – “Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity.”



Submitted photo

United Believers feeds the hungry in Baton Rouge. The congregation has made a commitment to reach the area where it recently relocated after several years of praying and waiting for God to reveal the location.

PRAYING AND WAITING

During their three-year search for a new home, the congregation was introduced to Oakcrest Baptist.

At one time, that congregation had as many as 600 participating in Sunday morning worship, but as the demographics around the neighbor-

hood changed, attendance steadily declined, with fewer than 20 attending last year.

After a meeting among representatives of the two churches, in June and then another in October, Oakcrest Baptist leaders told Pigeo God was leading them to allow

See UNITY, page 12



Submitted photo

The men of United Believers Baptist gather to lead an evening concert as part of its “Men of Light” weekend in October.

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La. Baptists in D.C. lead religious liberty efforts

By Staff
Baptist Message

WASHINGTON – Representatives Ralph Abraham, M.D. and Mike Johnson are two co-sponsors of H.R. 6633, the Turkey International Financial Institutions Act, that directs U.S. representatives at international financial institutions to oppose loans to Turkey, pending the release of U.S. citizens and consular staff.

Abraham is a member of the First Baptist Church in Alto, and Johnson is a member of the First Baptist Church in Bossier City.

The bill is in response to Turkey's wrongful imprisonment of North Carolina pastor Andrew Brunson, who has served in Turkey for 23 years as a missionary. He has been

held captive by the Turkish government for nearly two years where he has reportedly been subjected to deplorable conditions and denied legal counsel.

"Too many Christian missionaries face persecution world-wide for practicing their faith," Abraham said in a press release. "It's time for President Erdogan to release Pastor Brunson and any Americans he's holding and allow them to come home, or his nation should face the consequences."

Saying these sanctions "will hit them where they hurt," Abraham urged Erdogan to avoid the sanctions and simply do the right thing "and let these people come home."

There were 19 other original cosponsors.

Meanwhile, Abraham and Johnson joined five other

members of the Louisiana congressional delegation (Sens. Bill Cassidy, John Kennedy; Reps. Steve Scalise, Clay Higgins, Garret Graves) to sign a petition asking the Supreme Court, July 27, to overturn the 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, and keep a cross as part of a memorial, in Bladensburg, Md., which honors veterans who died in World War I.

Only one Louisiana law-

maker, Rep. Cedric Richmond of New Orleans, did not sign the amicus brief.

The federal lawsuit was filed by the American Humanist Association, which said the giant Latin cross on public property violates the Constitution's First Amendment against government establishment of religion.

However, Scalise argued taking down the cross was

an infringement of religious liberty.

"We must protect our national memorials to those who have given their all in support of our country and acknowledge the role that religion plays in American life," he said.

One hundred nine U.S. senators and representatives signed the amicus brief in support of the cross.

GB0 from page 2

The Georgia Barnette Offering also allows all Louisiana Baptist churches, regardless of their size, to support a church plant. Corley said \$750 given through the state missions offering funds a church plant supplement for one month.

"It's a way every church can be involved in church planting through an offering to Georgia Barnette Offering," he said. "A church may say we are too small to plant another church, but through the Georgia Barnette Offering every church can be involved in church planting."

He said the offering will help meet a goal of planting 300 new churches by the year 2020.

"It really fuels our church planting efforts across Louisiana," Corley said. "Our church plants receive supple-

ments and free training that can be expensive otherwise. This funding helps provided a lot of fuel for our 223 churches planted since 2010."

Gibbie McMillan, state disaster relief director for Louisiana Baptists, said his budget relies on funds from the Georgia Barnette State Missions Offering. Through the generous gifts, Louisiana Baptist Disaster Relief volunteers receive the necessary training and equipment needed to be the hands and feet of Jesus to those impacted by a hurricane, flood, tornado or other natural disaster.

"Without the Georgia Barnette Offering we would not have any funds to operate disaster relief," he said. "This is vital to our continued training and being prepared for the next disaster that is coming."

Not if it happens but when it happens."

MOVING BEYOND THE 'WHAT IF'

Janie Wise, women's missions and ministries strategist for Louisiana Baptists, added that, too often, Christ followers limit their thinking and therefore limit the possibilities of seeing God move. This is the year to look beyond limits to the "what if," she said.

"What if we meet our \$1.7 million goal," she said. "The means for assisting church plants would be multiplied. Resources for training disaster relief volunteers and mission education leaders would be increased. The partnership for compassion ministries would expand. Support funding for missions teams of children and adults would be available."

"To reap an abundant harvest, the farmer sows generously," she said. "That's how we must think and pray about reaching our state for Christ and support these efforts. This year we must think big, pray large and give abundantly."

Even though the week of prayer for the Georgia Barnette State Missions Offering is a few weeks away, churches are encouraged to begin promoting it now. Churches that have not yet received promotional materials should call the LBC Women's Missions and Ministry office at 318.448.3402.

Louisiana Baptist Children's Home & Family Ministries, Monroe, LA

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Immigrant from page one

until he officially obtains a green card that will allow him to return to his former role. "The fact that God initiated this process gave me the confidence and assurance I needed to know that He who begins a good work for us here at First Madisonville, He will be the one to bring it to completion.

"I knew the Lord would provide for us," said Parvu. "I have people who ask 'How do you make it without receiving compensation.' It's been a journey of faith, but the Lord never forsook us."

Parvu became pastor of FBC Madisonville in January 2017, soon after he graduated with a Master of Divinity degree from the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services allow international students, classified as F-1, to work for one year on a student visa towards getting on-the-job experience in their field of study. In a year, the church grew from 25 people in Sunday morning worship service to 55.

Then this past January, he was forced to resign because his permission to participate in Optional Practical Training had expired. Consequently, he was no longer able to legally serve as pastor or receive any form of compensation for his work.

Todd, who had served as a volunteer and later as a staff member with the congregation since he started classes at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary in 2014, assumed the role of associate pastor when Parvu resigned.

While the thought of leaving the church for another congregation was tempting, Todd told the *Baptist Message* he knew God wanted him to remain at First Madisonville so he could help Parvu obtain official permission as a foreign national to live and work permanently in the United States. It is commonly called a green card.



Ethan Todd (right) has remained at First Baptist Church Madisonville as associate pastor to help Andrei Parvu (left) get his green card so Parvu can officially return as pastor.

COMPLICATED PROCESS

The lengthy governmental process began in February 2017, when the USCIS required the church to complete an equal opportunity audit to prove the church was earnestly trying to hire an immigrant.

Meanwhile, Parvu and his wife, Helga, moved out of the church parsonage, and he stopped receiving a salary in order to comply with the law.

At the same time, Todd was dealing with an urge to move onto another church

and undertake another revitalization effort like the one he was a part of at First Madisonville. But, he felt the nudging of the Holy Spirit to remain and help it navigate through the tedious immigration process so Parvu could officially return as pastor.

"I had been talking to people about doing ministry and one day I started praying," Todd said. "You have those prayers where God is slapping you on the hand and getting you to think reasonably with common sense. He made me realize with the church's situation Andrei won't be able to be paid. God was saying you abandon this church now and it won't make it through this."

"I argued with God I only had a master's degree and He needed someone with a Ph.D. in church administration," he continued. "God said, 'You are not qualified for it, but are the best option they have.' Andrei and I just sat down and you could see the deep concern on Andrei's face because he knew this was not a good situation."

DETERMINED SPIRIT

Committed to help his friend obtain a green card, Todd worked more than 40 hours a week and sought the help of financial advisors, lawyers and Certified Public Accountants.

To his surprise, many of those he called offered to work at a low cost, and some even donated money to the church to assist in their cause.

"I would talk to different law offices and we got different responses," Todd said. "Some said, 'You are insane,' and would hang up on me, others were like, 'I respect your bravery so much I am charging you half of what we charge,' or they said, 'I so respect your faith in this I won't profit in

this.'"

"It's like everyone was on our side," he continued. "They would sit and talk with us and say I will help you through this. It was so amazing the encouragement we got. It was so amazing with me being so under-qualified, but everyone was picking me up on their shoulders."

NEEDS MET

While Todd and Parvu were engulfed in legal work, the church continued to grow and reach the surrounding community. Through door-to-door evangelism and events at the church such as a yearly community appreciation lunch and trunk or treat, the men saw God multiply the flock.

In 2017, the church added four new members through baptism. Since January 2018, they have seen another two baptized and anticipate more taking that step of faith before the year concludes.

"The thing I love about our story is the miracle God has performed," Parvu said. "When things like this happen, I love it because the only thing I can do is move out of the way and give Him all the glory. When we are faithful in serving Him, He can do things far beyond our understanding or far beyond what we can think or imagine. We have seen this here in an amazing way. It's God's grace and we are so grateful for it."

Andrei and Helga Parvu currently live on the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary campus and continue to take graduate courses to expand their education, patiently awaiting the USCIS office to process the remaining documents, while anxious to receive the documents that will allow them to move back to serve their church family in Madisonville.

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Foundation weathers summer market conditions

By Jerry Love
Director of Planned Giving

ALEXANDRIA – Excessive summertime heat surrounded the mid-year meeting of the Louisiana Baptist Foundation Board of Trustees on July 24. However, board members were cool and calm as they took care of the business at hand which proved to be fairly mild, observers noted.

Chuck Murray, LBF CPA and controller, reviewed the financial positions for the quarter- and year-to-date. Assets under management as of June 30, 2018 stood at \$162,540,914, which is less than the beginning year assets by about \$4.5 million.

This difference is due to at least one church using funds for a building project, combined with the normal cycle of churches and entities withdrawing funds during late spring and summer months.

Murray and Executive Director Wayne Taylor jointly

reviewed a summary of the data regarding the performance of the Foundation's investments for the year, thus far, and reported the following returns:

-- Short Term Fund: 1.2 percent actual annualized yield;

-- Group Investment Fund, comprised of various market sectors: 0.28 percent total return;

-- Diversified Income Fund, conservative income-oriented fund: -0.51 percent total return.

The funds are all generating returns that exceed their respective benchmarks as well as in line with the Investment Policies established by the Board of Trustees.

A review of the budget revealed a positive trend for the first half of the year. The LBF budget surplus at mid-year includes money for a new position that was approved and budgeted but not yet filled.

Laurie Ardoïn with Spangler - Stewart Insurance Agen-

cy updated trustees about the insurance coverage associated with their service, including directors and officers coverage and travel insurance while in route to LBF functions. Taylor said he and Ardoïn would discuss the policies in detail and report to the board any recommendations for change in coverage.

Evelyn Renfrow, partner with the CPA firm of Payne, Moore and Herrington, LLP, reviewed her firm's audit of the Foundation, issuing an "unmodified opinion," or "clean" audit report.

The opinion letter from the firm states that the LBF financial statements "present fairly, in all respects, the financial position of Louisiana Baptist Foundation as of December 31, 2017." The audit report was accepted and approved unanimously by trustees.

The next meeting for the Louisiana Baptist Foundation trustees is scheduled for October 23, 2018.

The Louisiana Baptist Foundation assists individuals in making gifts that benefit Louisiana Baptist churches and ministries, and to assist Baptist churches and entities with asset manage-

ment. To learn more about the work and ministry of the Foundation, to review investment returns for its managed funds, or to see a list of current trustees, go to www.LBFinfo.org.

Taylor from page one

EARLY START TO MINISTRY

Taylor, who was born in Greenville, Mississippi, accepted Christ when he was 15. A year later, he preached his first sermon at Forkland Baptist Church in Greenville, where he served as pastor from his junior year of high school until he graduated from Mississippi College in Clinton, Mississippi.

Taylor also was pastor of three more churches, including two separate stays at Natalbany.

"I have been committed to serving my God in ministry for 61 years," Taylor said. "He has never failed me. His Mercy and Grace have sustained me."

"Just working with people and being able to see folks get saved has made my time here memorable," he said. "Lives have been changed by the filling of the Spirit of God. We have as our mission statement to lead people to Jesus Christ, and then see them filled with the spirit which will empower them for spiritual growth."

DEDICATED TO DISCIPLING FAMILIES

Taylor has baptized entire generations of families at Natalbany. Children's minister Alisa Colona is among those; Taylor baptized her dad, her children and herself.

"With his approaching retirement date it's been very difficult on some of us, and especially me," she said. "I thought of when my children and I were baptized, I can't say enough about him."

He's there for anything. Anytime I and my children have needed anything, he has been there. As a leader you are supposed to think into the future. That's one of his attributes. He finds people and gives them the support and help to serve for many years to come."

Taylor said serving for more than four decades at the same church has afforded him the blessing of watching hundreds earnestly seek God and then serve Him.

"It's certainly been so satisfying and rewarding to see people grow in the knowledge of Jesus Christ," Taylor said. "Discipleship is what Jesus commanded us to do. Part of becoming a disciple is to follow the Lord's teachings and His commands. What we try to do is to make sure that these people have had a genuine experience with the Lord."

"We want to take them through a process of talking about what it means to be a Christian and what it is like to have a change in your life," he continued. "Serving as a pastor is all about introducing people to Jesus, baptizing them and then seeing them grow as they are taught the Bible. I've enjoyed seeing young people come to Christ, grow in Him and then bring others with them to the Kingdom. That's one of the blessings I will take away when I retire."

Natalbany will honor Taylor Aug. 12 with a special presentation and reception at 2 p.m. He will deliver his final sermon at Natalbany during its 10:15 a.m. worship service that day.

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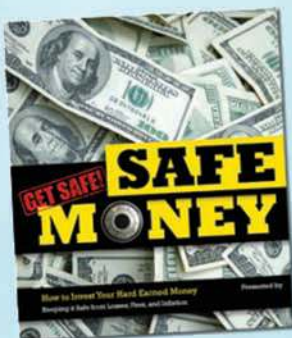
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John Storey named LBC DR volunteer of the year

By Staff
Baptist Message

BOSSIER CITY – Retired Air Force Lt. Col. John Storey has never shied away from responding to a disaster, whether it be the great 2016 flood in south Louisiana or the 2017 hurricanes that devastated east Texas and Puerto Rico.

Since August 2016, Storey has responded to three disasters and volunteered with five organizations, including with the Louisiana Baptist Disaster Relief for eight months. For his devotion, Storey has earned recognition as the 2018 Louisiana Baptist Disaster Relief Volunteer of the Year.

“I am very lucky that I am at a stage in life where I can devote so much of my time and energy on helping others who are less fortunate,” Storey told the *Baptist Message*. “It also helps that my wife supports me and understands my desire

to give back as much as I can while I am still young enough and healthy enough to do so.

“God has allowed me the opportunity to serve with many people of different religions,” he said. “Whether it be Catholics, Baptists, Protestants, Lutherans or Methodists, we all are committed to serving God and helping others,” he continued. “When I was presented this award, I didn’t feel qualified to have earned it. There were many more people who spent more time with the SBC that were more deserving than me.”

The New York native retired from the Air Force in February 2012 and transitioned to serving as a full-time volunteer. He helped out with various service organizations in the Shreveport-Bossier area as well as other groups, including

the North American Mission Board, Rolling Hills Ministries in Ruston and Southern Baptist Disaster Relief.


During the last two years, he has helped cook 8,000 meals as part of a Rolling Hills Ministries feeding team as part of a Southern Baptist Disaster Relief effort in Beaumont, Texas, and worked with the North American Mission Board’s Send Relief team in Vidor, Texas, and Puerto Rico.

“While in Puerto Rico with Send Relief, we gave out toys to children in a very low income area,” he recalled of the trip in late December 2017. “One young girl wanted a scooter. I was able to procure the last one from our gifts and give it to her. She followed us around the rest of the day with a smile that never quit and kept us going.”



Submitted photo

John Storey was named the 2018 Louisiana Baptist Disaster Relief Volunteer of the Year. During the last two years, his involvement with Southern Baptist Disaster Relief has included helping cook 8,000 meals as part of a Rolling Hills Ministries feeding team in Beaumont, Texas, and working with the North American Mission Board’s Send Relief team in Vidor, Texas, and Puerto Rico



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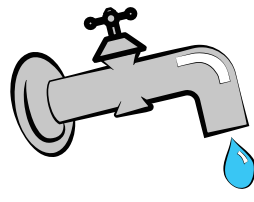
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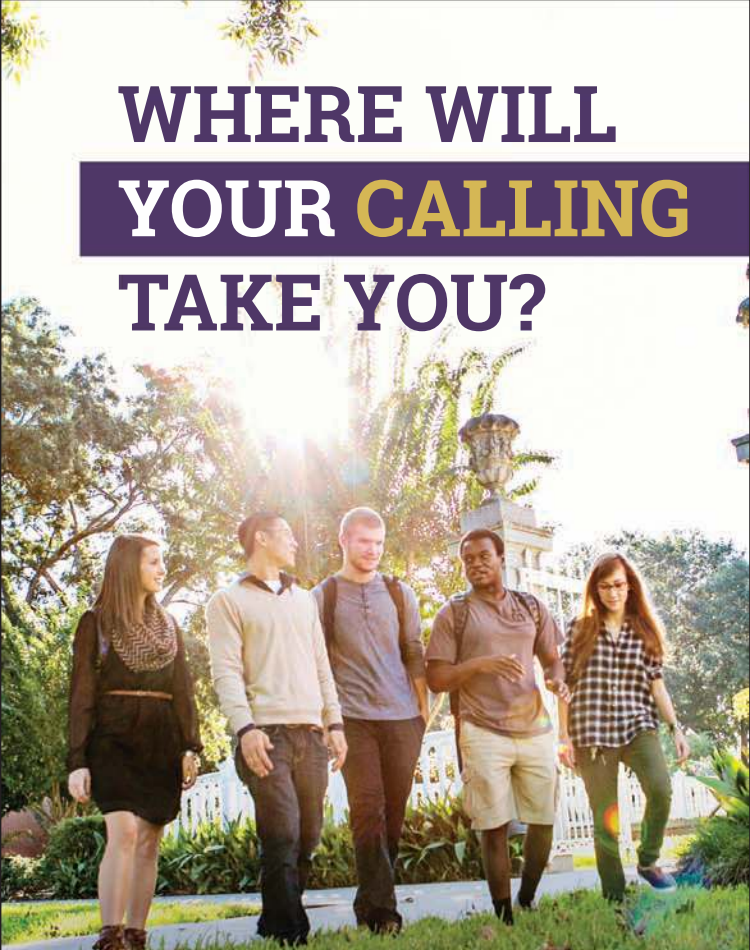
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Red Oak Baptist Church in Livingston, LA is seeking a bi-vocational pastor.

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Fellowship Baptist Church, Dubach, LA is seeking a full-time pastor
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Dr. William H. Green,
Chairman Search Committee
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Norwood Baptist Church, Norwood, LA is seeking a bi-vocational pastor.
Interested candidates should send résumés to the following addresses:
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Pisgah Baptist Church in Forest Hill, LA is seeking a bi-vocational minister of music to lead worship service.
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EDITOR'S NOTE: Do you have a Revival, Homecoming, a new pastor, a community outreach or a concert? The Baptist Message would love to share your church news with the rest of the state. It is very easy to do, just send in your information (who, what, where and when) to philip@baptistmessage.com or call 318.449.4345. To get your event in the paper, please submit your information three weeks prior to the event.

ON THE MOVE

- Dale Wooten retires as pastor at First Baptist Church, Rodessa.
- Elizabeth McLellan is the new children's director at New Chapel Hill Baptist Church, West Monroe.
- Brad (wife Bethany) Jett is the new worship pastor at First Baptist Church, West Monroe.
- Flint Miller has resigned as children and youth minister at First Baptist Church, Zwolle.

HOMECOMING

- Pleasant Hill Baptist Church, Farmerville: **Homecoming**, August 12, 10 a.m. Special Music: **The Sanctuary Quartet**. Pastor: Larry Eubanks.
- First Baptist Church, Greensburg: **152nd Homecoming**, August 12, 9:15 a.m. (Sunday School), 10:30 a.m. (Worship), Noon (Dinner on the grounds). Speaker: **Butch Knight**. Worship Leader: **Church Brown**. Please join with us and our friends as we celebrate what the Lord has done for our church through the years. If you have any questions or need directions please call 225.222.6580, First Baptist Church, 6260 Hwy 10, Greensburg, LA. Bring your favorite foods for dinner on the grounds following the morning service and come join us on this special day. Everyone is welcome. Pastor: Tommy Smith.
- Mount Vernon Baptist Church, West Monroe: **181st Homecoming Celebration**, August 19, 10:15 a.m. Guest Speaker: **Jerry**

Price, Director of Missions for Northeast Louisiana Baptist Association. Special Music: **The Sanctuary Quartet**. A covered-dish style lunch will be held after the service. Everyone is invited. Pastor: Randy Burdeaux.

- First Baptist Church, Hornbeck: **30th annual Homecoming**, August 19, 9:15 a.m. Dinner on the grounds will follow the service. Speaker: **Lynn Jones**. Pastor: Jack Bell.

REVIVAL

- Midway Baptist Church, Converse: **Revival**, August 8-12, 7 p.m. nightly, Speaker: **Larry Pridmore**. Pastor: Clinton Alford.
- Little Flock Baptist Church, Many: **Revival**, August 9-10. Evangelist: **Scotty McDowell**, chalk artist. Pastor: Otis Braman.
- First Baptist Church, Greensburg: **Revival**, August 10-11, 6:30 p.m. Speaker: **Butch Knight**. If you have any questions or need directions please call 225.222.6580, First Baptist Church, 6260 Hwy 10, Greensburg, LA. Pastor: Tommy Smith.
- Welcome Home Baptist Church, Hebert: **Revival**, August 12-15. Evangelist: **Scotty McDowell**, chalk artist. Pastor: Jim McKeithen.
- First Baptist Church, Dubach: **Family Crusade**, August 12-15. Evangelist: **2TALK42 Ministries**. Pastor: Cory Bruce.
- Liberty Baptist Church, Coushatta: **Revival**, August 12-16; Sunday 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Monday-Thursday, 6:30 p.m. Evangelist: **Sam Moore**. Special Music: **Liberty Baptist Church Praise Team**. Pastor: Harry Bamberg.
- First Baptist Church, Mandeville: **Harvest Sunday**, August 19, 8:30, 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. Speaker: **Ron Herrod**. Pastor: Jake Roudkovski.
- Gulf Coast Baptist Unity Revival, August 19, 6 p.m. Little Pass Baptist Church, Charenton Pastor: **Chris Holloway**; First Baptist Church, Morgan City, August 26, 6 p.m. Pastor: **Brent Romero**. Fellowships will follow each service.

- Elwood Baptist Church, Forest Hill: **Revival**, August 19-22, Sunday 10:30 a.m., Speaker: **John Hebert**. Special Music: **Brad Mount**; Sunday 6 p.m. Speaker: **Keith Manuel**. Special Music: **Brad Mount**; Monday, 7 p.m. Speaker: **Casey Johnson**. Special Music: **the Voices of LC**; Tuesday, 7 p.m. Speaker: **Casey Johnson**. Special Music: **the Harrigill Family**; Wednesday, 7 p.m. Speaker: **Brett Faulk**. Special Music: **Chain Free**. Pastor: Michael Evans.
- Houston River Baptist Church, Lake Charles: **Resurgence 2018: "A Rising Again into Life"**; August 19-22, Sunday, 10:15 a.m. and 5 p.m.; Monday-Wednesday, 6:30 p.m. Speakers: **Eddie Briery**, Shreveport (Sunday); **Braylon Harris**, Pastor of Mount Olive Baptist Church (Monday & Tuesday); **Wayne Jenkins**, former LBC Evangelism Director (Wednesday). Special Music: **Worship teams led by HRBC Scotty Blackwell and Mount Olive Baptist Church Nicholas Johnson**. Pastor: Lonnie Gothrup.
- Louisiana Baptist Association August revival meetings: August 19-23, August 19, 6:30 p.m., Refuge Baptist Church, Speaker: **Jacob Crawford**; August 20, 6:30 p.m., Life Point Church, Mansura. Speaker, **Ken Austin**; August 21, 6:30 p.m., Church at Marksville, Speaker: **Louis Charrier**. August 22, 6:30 p.m., Marksville Baptist Church. Speaker: **Adam Thornton**. August 23, 6:30 p.m., Red River Church. Speaker: **Norris Landry**.
- Morehouse 5 Church Progressive Revival, August 19-23; Twin Oaks Baptist Church, Sunday, 6 p.m., Speaker: **Ken Ronaghan**, pastor of Bonita Baptist Church, Bonita; Bonita Baptist Church, Bonita, Monday, 6:45 p.m., Speaker: **Bob Lonadier**, pastor of Horseshoe Baptist Church, Mer Rouge; New Friendship Baptist Church, Tuesday, 6:45 p.m. Speaker: **Luther Sanson**, pastor of Twin Oaks Baptist Church, Bastrop; Horseshoe Baptist Church, Mer Rouge, Wednesday, 6:45 p.m. Speaker: **Andy Myrick**, pastor of Oak Hill Baptist Church, Bastrop; Oak Hill Baptist Church, Bastrop, Thursday, 6:45 p.m., Speaker: **Todd Wooden**, pastor of New Friendship Baptist Church, Bastrop. An offering will be taken

nightly and given to some entity in the community. Everyone is invited to attend.

LAGNIAPPE

- Bob Colquette is available for pulpit supply, interim or pastorate. He is willing to relocate. Call 337.401.6551 or 337.401.6553.
- Faith Baptist Church, Bastrop: **Pastor needed**. Please send résumés to Attn: Pastor Search Committee, Faith Baptist Church, 809 Cleveland St., Bastrop, La. 71220 or email résumés to faithbcbastropppc@gmail.com.
- McClendon Baptist Church, West Monroe will honor **Vickie Arthur with a reception on her retirement** after 20 years of service as youth director August 12 at 6 p.m. in the Worship Center. Reception will follow in the gym. Pastor: Kevin Stewart.
- Stevendale Baptist Church, Baton Rouge: **Brian Free and Assurance in concert**, August 10, 7 p.m. Pastor: Stephen Young.
- North Monroe Baptist Church, Monroe: **20th annual Jennifer Robertson Memorial Praise Fest**, August 11, 6 p.m. The praise fest will be a Gaither-style concert. Anyone wishing to sing in the choir is asked to attend a practice on Saturday, August 11 at 9 a.m. at North Monroe Baptist Church. A love offering will be received and monies collected will be deposited into the Jennifer Robertson Memorial Scholarship Fund at Louisiana College. For additional information, please contact Bill Robertson 318.449.4291 or Elaine McKay at 318.248.3609. Pastor: Bill Dye.
- McDonald Memorial Baptist Church, Jonesboro: **The Southern Plainsmen in concert**, August 12, 6 p.m. A love offering will be taken. Pastor: Randy Dark.
- Judson Baptist Retreat Center, St. Francisville: **Adult Fish Fry**, August 14, Registration: 9:30 - 10 a.m.; Music: 10 a.m.; Lunch to follow. Music: **Wood Creek Boyz**. Cost: \$12.00/person. After lunch, participants will prayer walk JBRC or prayer drive JBRC. To reserve your place, call 225.634.7225 by August 9.
- First Baptist Church, Keithville: **Southern Gospel Jubilee featuring Heaven's Echo, NHim, and other groups**, August 17-18,

Friday, 6 p.m.; Saturday, 5 p.m. Cost: Free. A love offering will be taken. First Baptist Keithville is located at 6295 Williams Rd, Keithville, LA. For more information, call 318.925.9476 Pastor: Michael Stowell.

- Amite Baptist Church, Denham Springs: **The Forge - Student conference**, August 17-18. Speaker: **Derek 'Griff' Griffon**, Student and Young Adults Pastor at Fellowship Church, Prairieville. Cost: \$20 and deadline is August 10. Registration forms and payment are to be sent to the ELBA office. Pastor: Michael Luce.
- Greenwell Springs Baptist Church, Greenwell Springs: **The 6th Annual Total Church Life Leadership Conference**, August 18, 8:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Speaker: **Danny Akin**, president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. Cost: \$25 per person before August 10 or \$30 after August 10 and at the door. The BAGBR, BASELA and ELBA Associations are once again working together to offer exciting church-wide training topics about all aspects of church service. Disaster Relief, Woman's Ministries, Men's Ministries and Conflict Resolution are just a few of the topics that will be discussed. Go to bagbr.org to see all of the other church related topics that will be offered and download your registration form.
- Carolina Baptist Church, Saline: **Southern Plainsmen in Concert**, August 19, 11 a.m. A love offering will be taken. Pastor: Ken Roberts.
- Watson Baptist Church, Watson: **Greg Sullivan in concert**, August 19, 4:30 p.m. A love offering will be taken and finger foods will follow the concert. Pastor: John Pemberton.
- Broadmoor Baptist Church, Shreveport: **Northwest Louisiana Pro-Life Prayer Breakfast**, August 23, 7:30-9 a.m. Speaker: **U.S. Congressman Mike Johnson**. Cost: \$25. To register go to ProLifeLouisiana.org. Pastor: Church Pourciau.
- Louisiana College, Pineville: **Matt Papa in concert**, August 23, 7 p.m. Doors open at 6 p.m. Guinn Auditorium. Cost: \$10 at the door or free with current LC ID.

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318.686.2360 | www.lbu.edu

Scripture Crypto

The Scripture Crypto is a Bible verse in which one letter has been substituted for another, thus encoding the verse. To find out what the verse is, you must determine what each letter is a substitute for. An "a," for example, may stand for a "t" in this week's issue of the ScriptureCrypto. Next week, "a" could stand for a "d." Each week, each letter is different. Solve by trial and error. The answer will be given next week. Note: All numerals, such as those in the scripture reference after the verse, are spelled out.

dxstye obvm mdj obymdocs pxht bv dj dbmd ujff

mbcedm, mdbm dj ibq uj busj uq vxcft txkmhyfj uxmd

mx jldxhm bft mx kxfayfkj mdj ebyfvbqjhv.

mymcv xfj:fyfj

Clues:
M = T; B = A

Answer to July 26 Scripture Crypto:
Ezekiel six:eight

Unity from page 5

United Believers Baptist to share the space.

"They told us we were the church that could reach the community for years to come, and they wanted to work out an agreement with us to gracefully phase out," Pigee said. "I said to my people this is a great privilege the Lord has allowed us to walk alongside this aging congregation. With the racial divide that is happening in America, it's amazing to see an aging Anglo church willing to partner with an African American plant as God allows us to escort them to glory."

Charles Bennett, pastor of Oakcrest, said the relationship between his church and United Believers Baptist has been pleasant.

"We felt we had a choice," Bennett said. "We could let the buildings not being used to deteriorate, or, we could look for a group we felt good about coming in to use the facilities; and, we wanted a Southern Baptist group in here. Our people are very open and appreciative by the way they have come in and made a difference for Christ."

Tommy Middleton, director of missions for the Baptist Association of Greater Baton Rouge, applauds

the members of Oakcrest for seeing the need for ministry in its facility for generations to come.

"To the credit of Oakcrest and the leadership and sensitivity of United Believers, it's turned out to be almost a textbook of how it's supposed to be in terms of support, cooperation and love," he said.

"In many churches throughout our state and national conventions, churches go through seasons of great growth and then that season passes," he continued. "If there is not a renewal and a shift to address cultural changes in the neighborhood, that trend continues downward. When they recognize how to correct it or change it over to another church, it allows for a vibrant Gospel witness to continue in that area. Sometimes we hang out with stubbornness -- you've got to let it go."

MOVING FORWARD

Since moving into the new building, United Believers Baptist has spent most of its time upgrading the property and building relationships with residents of the neighborhood.

Members have spruced up the



Submitted photo

Pastor Manuel Pigee brings a message during a worship service at United Believers Baptist Church. He has seen the church steadily grow since becoming pastor in 2011.

landscaping, restriped the parking lot, installed lights in the parking lot, and placed monitors and additional lighting inside the worship center.

Ministry efforts at its new campus have included a spring revival featuring Middleton and Franklin Avenue Baptist Pastor Fred Luter, a Mother's Day tea and door-to-door visitation. Future ministry plans include a class to prepare young boys and girls for adulthood and after-school tutoring on Wednesdays.

"One piece of feedback from the community is they want a place for

children to go for spiritual enrichment and learn practical life skills," Pigee said. "We want to do social ministry as a way to create bridges and bring people to the Kingdom through a life-changing relationship with Christ."

"I anticipate us really impacting the community and touching the lives of families and youth through our social outreach programs," he said. "We are integrating ourselves more into the community. More than anything we want to be a lighthouse, where people's faith is being shaped and they are being taught to practice it."

GEORGIA BARNETTE STATE MISSIONS OFFERING

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BIG

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WEEK OF PRAYER
SEPTEMBER 16-23, 2018
GOAL: 1.7 MILLION

A LOT
of SEEDS
MAKE a
BIG HARVEST.
2 CORINTHIANS 9:6 (CEV)



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