



THE BAPTIST MESSAGE

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ECON 2019: Imprinting the next generation

By **Brian Blackwell**
Message Staff Writer

COVINGTON – Passing the Christian faith down to the next generation of leaders will be the central focus of next week's Louisiana Baptist Evangelism Conference, Jan. 28-29, at the First Baptist Church in Covington.



"We need to evangelize and disciple the next generation so that we may imprint the need for living for Christ as an important part of their life," said Keith

Manuel, evangelism and church growth director for Louisiana Baptists. "I encourage you to bring a van load of church members who are concerned about passing their faith down to the next generation. Those who attend will be encouraged and equipped when they return home to reach their Jerusalem for Jesus."

The first two sessions on Jan. 28 will feature Fred and Chip Luter, who will share the stage in a rare father-son preaching engagement, and Ed Newton. Fred Luter is pastor of Franklin Avenue Baptist Church, New Orleans, and Chip Luter is pastor of the Sulphur

See **ECON 2019**, page 2



Submitted photo

Pastor Mark Robinson baptizes Scarlett Lachney, the 50th person baptized in five years. This milestone helps to highlight the rebirth the First Baptist Church in Bunkie has experienced since 2013 -- along with an accompanying increase in Sunday worship attendance from 60 to 100.

First Bunkie rings in New Year with new birth

By **Brian Blackwell**
Message Staff Writer

BUNKIE – The First Baptist Church in Bunkie started 2019 by celebrat-

ing a new birth in Christ, baptizing its 50th convert in five years.

"Baptisms bring new life in the person and in the church," Pastor Mark

Robinson said. "When you see someone baptized it gives someone hope that God is working in people around you, and it sets the precedent of obedience to God – those who come behind you see the steps that have to be taken to make public their faith. I don't see any reason we wouldn't baptize 10-15 a year. Our members always have been mission-minded but now there is a vision spreading of being 'on mission.'"

The January 13 baptism is representative of a rebirth First Baptist Bunkie has experienced since 2013. Five years ago, worship service attendance averaged 60 and Sunday school drew around 40, according to Annual Church Profile statistics.

Through January, attendance for worship services has increased to 100 and Sunday school has averaged nearly 80.

See **NEW BIRTH**, page 6

'Compassion' to show & share the Gospel

By **Brian Blackwell**
Message Staff Writer

RAYVILLE – Deep in the Delta farmland, Deanna Corbett battles hunger.

Most days she works alongside volunteers to plant vegetables in a community garden or stuff backpacks with food for the impoverished in Richland Parish. Her end goal is to plant seeds that reap a harvest for Christ.

According to statistical data, Richland Parish is one of the poorest parishes in the state. U.S. Census information shows that 27.8 percent of Richland Parish residents live below the poverty level, ranking it ninth out of 64 parishes in Louisiana.

COOPERATIVE COMPASSION

Through her work, Corbett, endorsed by the North American Mission Board as a Mission Service Corps missionary and funded in part by Louisiana Baptists as an association compassion ministry, is doing her part to meet a physical need and give parish residents hope in Jesus.

"The projects give us a strong presence – the people know why we are there and what we are

See **COMPASSION**, page 7

ECON 2019 from page one

Springs campus of Idlewild Baptist Church in Tampa, Florida.

Newton is pastor of the Community Bible Church in San Antonio, Texas.

Prior to Newton's message, students will gather at the church's youth building for a pizza party and entertainment.

Organizers are encouraging churches unable to travel to Covington to host a live stream of Newton's message as a way to broaden the

geographic reach of this evangelistic event. The broadcast will begin at 7 p.m.

LIVESTREAM AVAILABLE

Churches can log onto louisiananbaptists.org/livestream and follow instructions from there for access.

Last year, numerous churches hosted rallies via livestream.

The remaining sessions of ECON will be streamed live over the Internet as

well, and each message will be downloadable soon after the original broadcast by using louisiananbaptists.org/econ.

STUDENT OUTREACH

Manuel said Student Night will emphasize reaching the lost souls of the next generation and build on the challenge "to share Christ with others" presented in November during the 2018 Youth Evangelism Celebration in Alexandria.

He is praying that some of the students who attended YEC will invite

their friends to ECON or one of the simulcast parties being hosted at satellite locations throughout the state.

The final day of ECON will feature another father-son duo, David and Eric Hankins. David Hankins is the Louisiana Baptist executive director, and Eric Hankins is pastor of the First Baptist Church in Fairhope, Alabama.

Other speakers include Argile Smith, senior pastor of the Parkway Baptist Church in Biloxi, Mississippi, and Lee Strobel, an atheist-turned-Christ follower who authored the best-selling book "The Case for Christ."

The praise and worship lineup includes David Phelps, an award-winning Gospel artist from Nashville, Tennessee; Benji and Jenna Cowart and David Logan, worship leaders at

First Baptist Covington; the Southeast Louisiana Church Orchestra; and, a combined choir from area churches.

The conference also will feature breakout sessions and the senior adult lunch, both on Jan. 29.

Topics for the sessions will be geared toward reaching the next generation.

Topics include sharing the Gospel with children, praying the prayer of faith, communicating with the next generation and equipping parents to share the Gospel.

SENIOR ADULT ENCOURAGEMENT

The senior adult lunch at 11:30 a.m. Jan. 29 will feature messages by Smith and music by Phelps.

Any remaining tickets for the lunch are \$15.

"We've got a great program lined up for the Senior Adult Luncheon at the Evangelism Conference," said Jeff Ingram, adult ministry strategist for Louisiana Baptists.

"Seniors are encouraged to come early and stay late. I hope seniors across the state will join us on January 28-29 for ECON."

For more information about ECON, visit LouisianaBaptists.org/ECON.

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Gunter: My Pro-Life Testimony

By Brian Gunter
Pastor, First Pollock

Ten years ago, I witnessed the tragedy of fifteen mothers walking into a Fort Worth abortion clinic to take the life of their unborn child. I pleaded with them to reconsider as they went in pregnant, then a few hours later came out broken and full of regret.

I spent my first morning outside an abortion clinic with my Hebrew professor from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Dr. Eric Mitchell, who had been to that sidewalk many times before. We shared the gospel with those women and prayed for God to turn their hearts away from death to life.

I went home and tried to clear my mind, but I could not erase the memory of what I had seen that day. I wondered who those fifteen little boys and girls would have grown up to be. I asked myself: What would I do if I knew that some crazed mass-murderer would walk into my local elementary school tomorrow and murder fifteen children? Would I try to stop him? And then I asked myself: Is there any real difference between a school shooting and that abortion clinic where another fifteen

children will be slaughtered tomorrow?

Every day in America, three thousand babies are torn to pieces in abortion clinics in our communities. That is about the same number of people who were killed on September 11. Do you remember how you felt when the World Trade Center towers collapsed with all those people inside? That is how I have felt every day for the last ten years as I have thought about abortion.

Proverbs 24:11 commands us to "rescue those who are being taken away to death; hold back those who are stumbling to the slaughter." We have to do something to end this genocide against the most innocent victims among us, and that is what I have committed my life to doing.

I have spent many mornings on the sidewalk imploring moms and dads to choose life for their children and eternal life through Jesus Christ. With the guidance of the Holy Spirit, I have persuaded parents to change their mind. I have even led some to repent of their sins and place their faith in Christ, right there on the sidewalk as the clinic employees glared at me for sabotaging their business of selling

abortions to women in the most desperate moment of their life.

By God's grace, I spearheaded the effort to found Cenla Pregnancy Center in my community to support mothers and fathers in a crisis pregnancy. In the first year since opening, we have served over two hundred mothers in Central Louisiana, some of whom have told us that they would have had an abortion if they had not come to Cenla Pregnancy Center first.

It has been my joy to work with many other pastors and community leaders to organize the first pro-life march in Central Louisiana, where over five thousand people stand together for life every year. It has been my honor to help organize and speak at similar pro-life marches in Baton Rouge, Shreveport, Lake Charles, and Monroe.

I am convinced that if we will roll up our sleeves, step out of our comfort zone, and ask God for opportunities to serve, then the Lord will grant the cry of our hearts. I believe Jesus when he said: "If you ask



Doug Collier photo

Pastor Brian Gunter shares about the value of life during a past Louisiana Life March CENLA at the Alexandria Riverfront. Gunter also is outreach director of Louisiana Right to Life.

me anything in my name, I will do it" (John 14:14).

Will you ask God to show you how to join the fight to end abortion and save lives? Will you step out in faith and stand up for life?

Will you march for life with me this January and February across Louisiana? Will you volunteer your time or give to your local pregnancy center?

I cannot explain to you how it feels to hold the babies that you have been a part of saving from abortion, but I can promise you this much: it is worth it!

Brian Gunter is pastor of First Baptist Pollock. He serves as the outreach director for Louisiana Right to Life, and also is the board president of the Cenla Pregnancy Center.

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Chaplain in 'tall cotton' with jail ministry harvest



Submitted photo

Chaplain Sammy Morrow baptizes an inmate at Raymond Laborde Correction Center in Cottonport. Since he started serving as chaplain in September, Morrow has baptized three men inside the prison's chapel.

By Brian Blackwell
Message Staff Writer

COTTONPORT – Prison ministry was not on Sammy Morrow's radar when he first received the call in August to consider joining Raymond Laborde Correction Center as a chaplain.

Morrow had served as pastor of the Alpine First Baptist Church in Tioga and then the Pleasant Hill Baptist Church in Pollock, and believed he would continue ministering in this way for the foreseeable future. But Warden Sandy McCain derailed his plans.

"I got a call out of the blue asking if I had an interest in becoming the chaplain," Morrow said. "That wasn't on my radar. I didn't even know there was a prison in Cottonport."

"My wife, Paula, and I came down together and

looked at everything and met with Warden McCain," he continued. "He said, 'We aren't looking at anyone else and are waiting for the Lord to do this through you.' I knew beyond a shadow of a doubt the Lord was leading me to do this."

Since he started serving as chaplain in September, Morrow has baptized three men inside the prison's chapel. Every time he baptizes a new believer, the entire congregation of 150-200 men celebrates the chains that have been broken from bondage to sin.

"To have these young men come to know the Lord in circumstances like this, and be baptized, is one of the greatest rewards I have reaped in ministry," Morrow said. "If the Lord transforms their hearts and lives, they are not as likely to be repeat offenders, as is common, oth-

erwise. We are doing our part to help them reduce their chances of coming back here, by helping them become men of God."

More than 300 of the 1,800 inmates inside Raymond Laborde Correctional Center are involved in some aspect of ministry or biblical education. The first group of 28 men completed a 13-week spiritual formation class in December, and another 45 men began the class in mid-January. Some of the men also have taken New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary classes since being offered at the Cottonport facility three years ago.

Two inmates from the Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola, graduates of the NOBTS degree program there, transferred to the Raymond Laborde Correctional Center to become

See **CHAPLAIN**, page 7



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Spiritual Warfare and Your Church

Dr. Preston Nix, Professor of Evangelism at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary

Houston River 'beach' ministry is more than a kids' club

By Brian Blackwell
Message Staff Writer

SULPHUR – Volunteers with an after-school outreach are finding Jesus saves in the halls of Sulphur's E.K. Key Elementary School.

Since 2016, members of the Houston River Baptist Church in Sulphur have spent their Thursday afternoons serving up snacks, leading small group spiritual discussions and participating in games with 100 third to fifth graders at KiDs Beach Club.

Every student who attends receives a Bible and t-shirt, and some even place their trust in Jesus. Four children have accepted Christ since the start of the school year last fall.

"It's very moving to see a child come to trust Jesus," said Houston River Baptist Pastor Lonnie Gothrup. "We just want children to have an op-



Brian Blackwell photo

Pastor Lonnie Gothrup encourages members of KIDs Beach Club during a December meeting at E.K. Key Elementary School in Sulphur. Members of Houston River Baptist Church in Sulphur have spent their Thursday afternoons showing God's love to the third to fifth graders since the club was formed in 2016.

portunity to see the Gospel lived out and presented. All of our volunteers are laypeople who see an opportunity to love the kids,"

he continued. "We are not just going in there with a prayer. We are going to present them with the Gospel.

"This is an example of a church investing in the school children spiritually," he said. "Many parents see that and appreciate

it. While we may not see every child come to Christ, we are doing all we can to show His love to kids who may not have any other opportunity to hear about Jesus."

Beach Club is "an innovative ministry established to mobilize the church to go outside its walls in order to take the message of Christ into the heart of its community," according to the organization's website.

Since 2003, more than 96,000 kids have been impacted by clubs, which include locations in Louisiana (Caddo, Calcasieu and East Baton Rouge parishes) and 10 other states. At least 8,576 of these students have professed Christ as Savior, including 280 this school year.

Beach Club provides a way to reach families in the neighborhood who otherwise would not come

See **BEACH CLUB**, page 6

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New Birth from page one

MILESTONE OF FAITH

Robinson said the church was at a crossroads when he arrived in 2013, and faced the possibility of closing its doors. After Robinson met with the members, the congregation decided to renew itself with a revised vision to reach the community, specifically the next generation.

Since Robinson is unable to serve full time at First Baptist Bunkie because of his job as Baptist College Ministry state director for Louisiana Baptists, he relies heavily on other church leaders with whom he communicates daily by phone and also through heavy social media use.

Members wholeheartedly have embraced the mission mindset.

The church has hosted a team of Louisiana Baptist college students who coordinated a Vacation Bible School and soccer camp in recent years. Church members also formed a Bible study for deacons and other men in the church, coordinated a live Christmas nativity, started a food pantry, revived the Women on Mission program and began a women's prayer group.

"They are committed to the Gospel and being an

outpost in Acadiana," Robinson said. "The next step is to become even more missional."

MINDSET OF FAITH

One group that has seen remarkable growth is the youth.

In early 2013, the church drew just 10 youth for its Sunday morning and Wednesday night Bible studies. Around 30 youth now attend First Baptist Bunkie.

Youth leader Janet Webb attributed the growth to the Holy Spirit stirring inside their hearts. Some of the youth have taken on the role of mentor to younger students, and many have become bold in sharing their faith. The youth have developed a mission mindset, and have assisted senior citizens with household tasks, hosted a Fifth Quarter party following high school football games and attended Clear Camp and Youth Evangelism Celebration.

"It's amazing to see how youth are on fire for the Lord," Webb said. "They want their friends to be saved and are constantly bringing their friends to church and sharing faith with them."

"When one makes a profession of faith, several will go stand with them at the altar to show their support and love," she continued. "When they are baptized, several go to the baptistery. We are a family and it's a family unlike no other family."

MOVEMENT OF FAITH

Billy Townsend, a member since 1977, acknowledged God is on the move at First Baptist Bunkie, but believes its best days are ahead.

"We've developed an attitude of wanting to reach our community," said Townsend. "Our church has taken steps to be more multi-ethnic, have a more active presence on social media and stay more connected with Bunkie."

"Those steps have kept us connected to the community in a way we haven't done before," he continued. "It changed the attitude of us since our parents and grandparents were here before us and we didn't want to be the last ones to permanently lock the doors. This group effort has turned our church around and we are doing things that will carry us into a bright future that glorifies Christ."



Brian Blackwell photo

KiDs Beach Club members proudly showcase the Bibles they received along with a t-shirt. Some give their lives to Jesus during their time at the club.

Beach Club from page 5

to the church campus, Gothrup said. Before, none of the students in the housing authority complex came to Houston River Baptist, only 2.5 miles away. But now that parents know the joy their children are experiencing in Beach Club, they allow a church van to pick up their children for Wednesday evening activities. Moreover, on Sunday mornings, 30-40 students from the development can be counted among the 300 worshipers.

Gothrup's dream is to plant a church in the housing project, and he sees the relationships that are being formed now will help lead to the manifestation of this

goal one day. "Most of them won't come to Houston River, so, we go to them," Gothrup said. "They need Jesus and many housing authorities are a place Satan has his ways. In Louisiana, schools are the front door to the families. If we can reach the children, we then will reach the parents and branch into the neighborhood to see change there." Margaret Schreve, director of children's ministry at Houston River Baptist, has seen a 60 percent increase in children's ministry participation since the church began reaching out to the kids in the housing authority, growing from 15 to as high as 55 some Wednesday evenings.

"We've seen a broadening of acceptance among our members of those who are not like them," Schreve said. "I'm brought to tears when I see how they are praying for and loving on them. Our hearts are warmed to see an increase in compassion to be the hands and feet of Jesus to these kids."

Beach Club volunteer Tim Marcantel said he is thankful for the school's willingness to allow Houston River Baptist this opportunity.

"I know some of these kids don't go to church, and we are blessed to now give them the chance to make the most important decision in their lives. Christ gives them hope, no matter which situation they are in."

FREEDOM M-NOW

John 8:36

M-NOW is an exciting mission opportunity for all teens in grades 7-12. Formally known as Voyage, M-NOW is a retreat that stands for Missions Now. M-NOW is designed to engage students in mission action and witnessing so they may discover similar needs in the context of their own communities.

Schedule

Friday	
4:00-6:00 pm	Arrival/Check in
6:00 - 6:45 pm	Dinner
7:00 pm	Worship and Evening Activities
9:30 pm	Adventure Race
Saturday	
7:00-8:00 am	Quiet Time and Breakfast
8:00 am - Noon	Worship, Morning Activities, Off-Site Mission Projects
2:30 pm	M-Now Concludes

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CALL: Women's Missions and Ministry at 1.800.622.6549 or 318.448.3402

See BEACH CLUB, page 7

Compassion from page one

doing,” Corbett said. “The plight of the impoverished is massive.”

Corbett founded Shade Tree Missions shortly after she surrendered to full-time missions in May 2015.

With assistance from a volunteer base of nearly 25, Corbett conducts a backyard Bible club in a Rayville housing project, oversees food distribution to children in Richland Parish Schools, maintains a community garden in Rayville, works at a thrift store maintained by the Richland Baptist Association and holds bi-weekly Bible studies in the Richland Parish Detention Center.

Each ministry has provided its own unique opportunity to share the Gospel.

“The community garden is a good segue to the Gospel because we tell people the plot is free but it costs somebody something, much like salvation,” said Corbett, who is a member of

Woodlawn Baptist Church in Rayville. “Gardening has many lessons about the Gospel that make it easy to share Christ.

“A lady overheard me in a thrift store talking about our food ministry to schools and asked if we volunteered with it,” she said. “I told her, ‘Yes,’ and she was so grateful because her son is a recipient. Those two stories may seem like small things, but they are part of something much bigger here at Shade Tree Missions.”

CAJUN COMPASSION

Corbett is one of many Louisiana Baptists who are impacting the future with the Gospel through compassion ministries.

The 2020 Commission Report, formulated by 400 Louisiana Baptist pastors, lay leaders and denominational workers, emphasized compassion ministry as

one of ten “Key Actions In Reaching Our State” – known as KAIROS.

KAIROS 4, engaging LBC congregations in compassion ministries, provides “remarkable opportunities to share the love of Christ and reach people for faith,” the commission report states.

Clothing programs, ministries to prisoners and their families, abortion-alternative services, tutoring classes, disaster relief, counseling, and feeding ministries are examples of ministries that “can open doors to overlooked people groups,” the commission said.

Jeff Cook, compassion ministry strategist for Louisiana Baptists, said while he is pleased 65 percent of Louisiana Baptist churches participate in a compassion ministry, the goal is to have every church involved.

“A good compassion ministry seeks to accomplish four goals – meet human needs, build trust and relationships, fully share the Gospel and connect people to the local church,” he said.

For more information about Shade Tree Missions, e-mail shade-



Shade Tree Missions has used this community garden as one of several ways to minister in northeast Louisiana. The garden provides a segue to discuss the Gospel.

treemissions@gmail.com. Details about giving to the World Hunger Of-

fering can be found at <https://louisianabaptists.org/LWHO>.

Beach Club from page 6

Volunteer Cathie Basden comes away energized after each session.

“To watch one little boy who was so bitter and angry and troubled come in here and then to be there when he makes Jesus his forever friend is a moment I never will forget,” Basden said. “He brings his Bible in and feels love in this room. It’s exciting to plant a seed and then see him and others ac-

cept Christ.”

“I love loving on these kids that have very little,” she continued. “It doesn’t take much to make them smile and build a bond with them. It’s a way to let them know we love them and that Jesus loves them and there is hope.”

For information about starting a Beach Club, visit kidsbeachclub.org or call Gothrup at 337.527.5725.

Chaplain from page 4

missionaries specifically tasked with helping set up the moral rehabilitation program.

Now, they and Morrow can see the fruit of their labor as inmates in the program have become involved in ministry at the prison, mentoring other men and even forming a praise team.

McCain, who is a deacon at New Prospect Baptist Church in Dry Prong, said Morrow’s efforts can help a prisoner better cope with prison life.

“It makes my life much easier when we have a good faith-based program,” he said. “You can take one person, someone who has taken to heart what Chaplain Morrow has taught them, and he can make such a big difference.”

Once the inmates accept Christ, some will transfer to another dormitory. This effort allows them to share Jesus to those who may not yet be believers.

“We abide by the verse ‘go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,’” McCain said. “Our Jerusalem is right here. They go into the different areas and become a

calming factor to the other inmates.

“It is fun being a part of this,” he continued. “Being in prison itself is a pretty tough road. As Christians, we have an obligation to make sure these folks are treated in a Christ-like manner. They know they are breaking men’s and God’s law. This is a place of reviving and even becoming saved. It’s a needed commodity.”

As he looks to the future, Morrow is excited about the possibilities that lie ahead.

He hopes to offer additional upper level spiritual formation classes and establish a library and study hall.

“We are assisting the men comprehensively through their soul, mind and body,” Morrow said. “It’s helping them seeing what is rooted in their lives for many years. We study why we are here and see the toxic soil we are rooted in, and then the transformation is moving from bad to good fruit. For the offenders to come thinking they can change themselves, they can’t. We have to go to the root of the issue.”

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HUSSER: 'Forgiveness' essential for healing self and others

By Staff
Baptist Message

ALEXANDRIA (LBM) — Louis Husser believes forgiveness is fading as a spiritual discipline among Christians and that this is a reason so many relationship wounds have not healed among families and within congregations.

More importantly, Husser says, "forgiving is not an option."

Husser, pastor of the Crossgate Baptist Church in Robert, has written "Forgiving Others" to pass along key lessons he has learned from 35 years of counseling experiences.

Moreover, he approaches the issue from the position that "the Bible is the greatest personal/spiritual literature ever written," emphasizing the text from the Model Prayer that God forgives

us if we forgive others, but He does not if we do not (Matthew 6:14-15).

Husser told the *Baptist Message* that he wrote the book from the perspective that every experience is a "learning experience."

"I try to address how to learn and grow from verbal abuse, emotional neglect, abandonment, physical abuse, sexual abuse, financial abuse, church ministry abuse and even the suicide of a loved one," he said.

Each chapter includes a practical discussion from his experiences as a counselor, anchored in Scripture, and ends with a set of questions to elicit further thought.

Husser emphasizes in "Forgiving Others" the biblical point that "forgiv-



ing is an act of human will and not an act of human emotion" -- something that is sometimes difficult to do because in some cases, someone has

"altered our lives" so fundamentally, he writes.

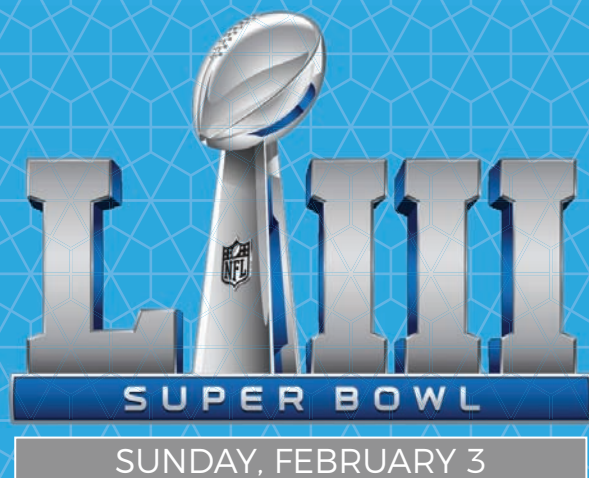
That is when Christians need to realize we forgive because God forgives, he says.

We do not have to "create forgiveness for any horrible offense," Husser writes. It is simply a matter of letting "Christ flow through us." When He flows through us His provision for forgiving others will flow through us, too.

The message of the cross "is the only avenue there is for people to come into a relationship with Jesus Christ," Husser reminds readers. The message of the cross also strengthens us to forgive others and ourselves, healing even the deepest wounds.

Husser told the *Baptist Message* he already has received orders for "Forgiving Others" and offers that obtaining a copy is as simple as contacting him by phone, (985) 507-7988, or email, pastorhusser@att.net, or by logging onto the website, www.trilogy.tv.

In 2018, Louis Husser helped lead an effort to defeat a state legislative proposal that would have allowed a riverboat casino to move to Tangipahoa Parish. The Louisiana Baptist Office of Public Policy honored him with the Shammah's Courage Award for his part in this successful effort against the money and influence of the gambling industry and seemingly overwhelming odds.



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U.S. birth rate plummets

The number of U.S. babies born in 2017, about 3.85 million, was the lowest total since 1987, according to the latest CDC figures.

Worse yet, the fertility rate, based on the average number of babies born to each woman of child-bearing age, fell dramatically to just above 1.76, well below the 2.1 level that is needed to keep a population stable, meaning no growth or decline.

Already, among whites in the United States, deaths began exceeding births in 2016. That looms large in terms of the population drop that is sure to follow because non-Hispanic whites compose 61 percent of the population.

For comparison, Japan's population is in a downward spiral, peaking at more than 128 million in 2010, a mere 25 years after dropping to a fertility rate of 1.76. Various demographers conclude that based on current fertility trends, Japan will decline by more than 19 million in population by 2050, a drop of almost 15 percent.

Meanwhile, China, boasting the largest population of 1.4 billion, is trending down in fertility as well – 1.75 but possibly as low as 1.6 – and has lost more than 20 million workers from the labor force the last six years as more Chinese workers age and retire without anyone younger to replace them.

Also, the low fertility rate is speeding up China's fall from the top in population.

Previously, the United Nations projected that India would overtake China in population by 2050. That projection has been updated to 2035, 2028 and now stands at 2024, although some demographers claim the shift could happen as early as 2022, only three years away.

India also is facing a fertility crisis, however, and will peak in population, perhaps as few as two decades after exceeding China in numbers of people.

Together, the populations of China, India and the United States make up almost 40 percent of the

CULTURAL NEWS

world population.

LifeWay's operating loss tops \$35.5 million

According to *Baptist Press*, LifeWay Christian Resources will close a yet-to-be-determined number of stores due to "an accelerated rate of erosion" of sales at its "brick and mortar" outlets.

Baptist Press released data from the Southern Baptist Convention annuals showing "total operating expenses exceeded sales" eight years in a row, growing in deficit each year from \$2.3 million to \$35.5 million, during 2010-2017. Data for 2018 has not been published.

Audited statements in the SBC annuals show LifeWay's total assets increased from \$407 million to \$452 million during the same time frame. However, this was due to the sale of two major properties: the Glorieta Conference Center in 2013 and the LifeWay building in Nashville in 2015.

LifeWay subsequently purchased land in the Gulch, a toney Nashville development area, and built a \$75 million facility.

Thom Rainer, Lifeway's CEO since 2006, announced in August 2018 that he plans to retire.

BP quoted a Jan. 15 email from Rainer to employees in which he wrote that coming changes at Lifeway would cause some "pain and disruption" but also offer "opportunities and

hope."

"It is an incredible time for LifeWay to get the message of the [G]ospel to the world and continue to offer biblical solutions for life," he said.

Data: Millennials poorly served by U.S. education system

A report published by the Pew Research Center in 2018 claimed millennials (ages 21 to 36 in 2017) "are much better educated" than their grandparents, completing more years of education and attaining higher degrees, on average, than their grandparents.

However, researchers for the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development, which tests for educational outcomes among adults around the world, found years of schooling and earning educational credentials and certificates were misleading measures of education.

The summary of highlights from the Survey of Adult Skills which tests literacy, numeracy and problem-solving in technology-rich environments, showed millennials aged



According to data from the CDC, the number of babies born in the U.S. has declined to the lowest total since 1987.

25-34 years old scored low in all three of these areas compared to their peers around the world. Even the best educated millennials in the United States performed poorly relative to their peers in other countries.

Researchers at the Princeton-based Educational Testing Service analyzed the data, too.

"We really thought [U.S.] Millennials would do better than the general adult population, either compared to older coworkers in the U.S. or to the same age group in other countries," Madeline Goodman, an ETS researcher who worked on the study, told *Fortune* magazine. "But they didn't. In fact, their scores were abysmal."

The ETS report concluded that "far too many

[Americans] are graduating high school and completing postsecondary educational programs without receiving adequate skills.

"If we expect to have a better educated population and a more competitive workforce," the report continued, "policy makers and other stakeholders will need to shift from one of educational attainment to one that acknowledges the growing importance of skills and examines these more critically."

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth..." Rom. 1:16

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<p>CAMPUS FOSTER PARENTS</p> <p>Husband/wife teams needed. Full-time positions include salary, benefits, paid vacation and training. Provide love, care, and hope in Christ to children in need. Applicants should not have children living at home under the age of 18. Must have a sense of call and commitment to a ministry of service to children and be an active member of a local Southern Baptist church.</p> <p>Please send résumé to Dr. Perry Hancock (phancock@lbch.org) or Susan Nolan (snolan@lbch.org) or P.O. Box 4196, Monroe, LA 71211.</p>	<p>HOMEPLACE COTTAGE MANAGERS</p> <p>Baptist women needed for full-time or part-time positions to serve as cottage managers in HomePlace, a transitional living ministry for homeless children and their mothers. The full-time position includes salary, benefits, housing, paid vacation, and training. Provide love, care, and hope in Christ to children and families in need. Both full-time and part-time positions require 24-hour work schedules.</p> <p>Please submit résumé to Susan Clark at sclark@lbch.org or P.O. Box 4196, Monroe, LA 71211.</p>
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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

■ **Larry Baldridge**, pastor of Bayou Life Baptist Church, Cottonport, is the new worship pastor at First Baptist Church, Abbeville.

HOMECOMING

■ Westside Emmanuel Baptist Church, Bogalusa: **70th Homecoming**, February 9, 10:30 a.m. Dinner on the grounds will follow the morning worship service. Speaker: **Marcus Rosa**. There will also be testimonies by charter members and former staff. Music: **Waylon Mills and the Westside worship band**. Special Music: **Reunion choir and orchestra**. The day will include celebration of baptisms. Pastor: Marcus Rosa.

REVIVAL

■ First Baptist Church, Haynesville: **Revival**, January 27-30, Sunday, 10:45 a.m. & 7 p.m.; Monday-Wednesday, 7 p.m. Meals each night will be in the Family Life Center at 6 p.m. Evangelist: **The Lisembys**. Bring your friends, family and the lost for a week of uplifting music, and encouraging preaching of salvation. Pastor: Jeff Tinsley.

■ Parkview Baptist Church, Tallulah: **Family Crusade**, February 10-13. Evangelist: **2TALK42 Ministries**. Pastor: Jason Lupo.

■ Deer Creek Baptist Association, Winnsboro: **Cluster Revivals**, February 17-22. Deer Creek Baptist Association will host cluster Revivals in 12 churches in Franklin Parish. There will be six churches in the north Franklin Parish area and six churches in the south Franklin Parish area. Evangelist: **Rubin Weaver**, pastor of Antioch Baptist Church, Farmerville (northern churches); **Gevan Spinney**, pastor of First Baptist Church, Haughton (southern churches). North Franklin Parish – Sunday, 6:30 p.m., **Crockett Point Baptist Church, Crowville**; Monday, 7 p.m., **Temple Baptist Church, Winnsboro**; Tuesday, 7 p.m., **Harmony Baptist Church, Delhi**; Wednesday, 7 p.m., **Baskin Baptist Church**; Thursday, 7 p.m., **First Baptist Church, Crowville**; Friday, 7 p.m., **Friendship Baptist Church, Baskin**. South Franklin Parish – Sunday, 6 p.m., **Calvary Baptist Church, Gilbert**; Monday, 7 p.m., **Fort Necessity Baptist Church**; Tuesday, 7 p.m., **South Central Baptist Church, Wisner**; Wednesday, 7 p.m., **First Baptist Church, Winnsboro**; Thursday, 7

p.m., **Chase Baptist Church**, Friday, 7 p.m., **First Baptist Church Wisner**. Director of Missions: Eddie Rhymes, Deer Creek Baptist Association.

LAGNIAPPE

■ **Alton Achord** available for supply work. He may be reached at 318.715.8874.

■ Trinity Baptist Church, Oakdale is giving away **34 choir robes** for anyone with a need. They are light blue in color with a dark blue collar. For more information, call Kenneth Hebert at 318.491.2693.

■ First Baptist Church, Covington: **Kirk Cameron's Living Room Reset with Matt Hammitt**, January 24, 7 p.m. Cost: www.ticketfly.com/purchase/event/1781914. Pastor: Waylon Bailey.

■ Cypress Baptist Church, Benton: **ManUp Men's Conference**, January 25, 5 p.m. Guest Speaker: **Hugh Freeze**. Join hundreds of men as we gather to hear former Ole Miss head football coach and recently named Liberty University football coach Hugh Freeze. Please join us at 5 p.m. for a catfish supper in the Field House; the program will start at 6:30 p.m. in the Worship Center. Pastor: John Fream.

■ First Baptist Church, Broussard: **Polar Blast Children's event**, January 25-26, Friday, 6 – 8:30 p.m.; Saturday, 9 a.m. – noon. This event is for children in grades 1-5. Come join us for snappy Bible adventures, icy games, snowy snacks, and frosty projects with a purpose and learn about God's Word. Register online at: <http://fbcbroussard.com/connect-with-us/polar-blast-registration>. Pastor: Weldon Moak.

■ Franklin Avenue Baptist Church, New Orleans: **Disaster relief ministry training**, January 25-26, 8 a.m.-2 p.m. For more information or to register, please go online to <https://louisianabaptists.org/event/2019-disaster-relief-training-new-orleans/>. Pastor: Fred Luter.

■ Philadelphia Baptist Church, Deville: **Loving Well women's retreat**, January 25-26, Friday, 6 p.m. and Saturday, 8:30-3 p.m. Cost: \$85 per lady. Register online at www.pbcministry.com. Pastor: Philip Robertson.

■ First Baptist Church, Haynesville: **Wild Game Supper**, January 26, 6 p.m. Bring your favorite wild game dish. Pastor: Jeff Tinsley.

■ Broadmoor Baptist Church, Shreveport: **Call to Prayer IV**, January 27, 6 p.m. Call to Prayer is sponsored by the Northwest Louisiana Baptist Association. DOM: Lane Moore. Pastor: Chuck Pourciau.

■ Elm Grove Baptist Church, Bossier City: **Chili Cook Off**, January 27, Noon. Who's the best chili cook. Bring your favorite pot of chili. Pastor: Brian Prucey.

■ First Baptist Church, Dry Prong: **Ladies Enrichment Day**, January 27, 10 a.m. Brunch will be served. Speaker: **Heather Gulde**. The day is sponsored by Big Creek WMU. Pastor: Drew Gardner.

■ First Baptist Church, Zachary: **Louisiana Disaster Relief Training**, February 1-2, Friday, 8 a.m. -2 p.m.; Saturday, 8 a.m. - 2 p.m. To register for the training, go to <https://louisianabaptists.org/event/2019-disaster-relief-training-baton-rouge/>. Contact Randy Osborn at 225.296.3943 or 225.614.8707 (cell). Director of Missions: Tommy Middleton.

■ Jameston Baptist Church, Jamestown: **Wild Game Supper**, February 2, 6 p.m. The church, which is located at 5852 Hwy 154, Jamestown, LA, invites everyone to bring their favorite wild game dish, salad or desert to this family friendly event. There will be door prizes and Christian fellowship. Speaker: **Jason McClendon, Lakeside High School football coach**. For more information, call 318.894.8631. Pastor: Stan Foster.

■ Martin Baptist Church, Coushatta: **We R Called in concert**, February 3, 11 a.m. Pastor: Richard Kaufman.

■ First Baptist Church, Lafayette: **Dennis Swanberg to speak**, February 3, 10:45 a.m. Pastor: Steve Horn.

■ First Baptist Church, Pineville: **First@First Business Leader Luncheon**, February 4, noon. Speaker: **Rick Brewer, president of Louisiana College**. Cost: \$10 and you may pay at the door. Please RSVP to Stewart Holloway (sholloway@fbcpineville.net). Pastor: Stewart Holloway.

■ First Baptist Church, Port Allen: **Law Enforcement Chaplain Training**, February 5, 8 a.m. – 4 p.m. (lunch will be provided). This is free and is open to everyone. To register, go online to <https://louisianabaptists.org/event/chaplaincy-training-2019-port-allen/>. For more information, contact Randy Osborn at 225.296.3943 or

225.614.8707 (cell). Director of Missions: Tommy Middleton. Pastor: Gray Peason.

■ Lanier Baptist Church, Baton Rouge: **Louisiana Baptist Singing Women in concert**, February 7, 6:30 p.m. Everyone is welcome. Pastor: Mike Ferguson.

■ First Baptist Church, Bossier: **Vertical Leadership Lunch**, February 7, Noon. Speaker: **Chief Kelvin Cochran**. Cost: Starting at \$12 via Eventbrite. Pastor: Brad Jurkovich.

■ First Baptist Church, Jonesville: **Layman Soul Winning Rally**, February 7, 6 p.m. Speaker: **Rubin Weaver**. Worship: **Chad Tingle**. There will be a catfish dinner before the rally. Pastor: Todd Whittington.

■ Social Springs Baptist Church, Ringgold: **Trevor Thomas Drama Ministries**, February 8, 7 p.m. Pastor: James Hester.

■ Trinity Baptist Church, Oak Grove: **Trevor Thomas Drama Ministries**, February 9, 6 p.m. Pastor: Jeremy Bullcock.

■ Hillcrest Baptist Church, Franklinton: **Tribute Quartet in concert**, February 9, 6 p.m. Pastor: Tommy Smith.

■ First Baptist Church, Mandeville: **2019 Men's Conference – Winning Spiritual Warfare**, February 8-9. Speaker: **Steve Gaines, pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church, Memphis, Tenn.** Cost: \$25. Pastor: Jake Roudkovski.

■ First Baptist Church, Evangeline: **WeRcalled in Concert**, February 10, 10:30 a.m. Pastor: Rod LeJeune.

■ Heflin Baptist Church, Heflin: **Avonue Trio in concert**, February 10, 6 p.m. Pastor: Ronnie Osborn.

■ Mount Pleasant Baptist Church, Co-

lumbia: **Trevor Thomas Drama Ministries**, February 10, 11 a.m. Pastor: Jerry W Hendrixson.

■ Parkview Baptist Church, Metairie: **Answers in Genesis event**, February 10-11. The schedule Sunday: 9:15 a.m. Are you intimidated; 10:30 a.m. Genesis and the Authority of Scripture; 6 p.m. Why Can't a Day Mean a Day; 7:30 p.m. Noah's Ark and the Global Flood. The schedule Monday: 9 a.m., Where there Dinosaurs on Noah's Ark (Grades K-6); 10:30 a.m., After their King (Grades 7-12); 6:30 p.m., Dinosaurs and the Gospel; 8 p.m., Worshiping the Creator God. Speaker: **Tommy Mitchell from AIG**. The event is free and open to everyone. The Monday morning sessions will on K-6 graders and 7-12 graders. Home-school children are urged to attend. For any large group that is coming email Pastor Michael Pogue at mpogue@pbc-metairie.com or call our church office so enough seats can be reserved. For more information, go to <http://pbcmetairie.com/> Pastor: Michael Pogue.

■ First Baptist Church, West Monroe: **The Alive Tour**, February 13, 7 p.m. Worship: **Big Daddy Weave, Becca Bradley, Jonathan Chu**. Pastor: Michael Wood.

■ First Baptist Church, Hornbeck: **30th Annual Wild Game Feast**, February 15, 6 p.m. Pastor: Jack Bell.

■ Victory Baptist Church, Hammond: **5th annual Bayou Youth Rally**, February 16, 4 p.m. Evangelist: **CT Townsend of CT Townsend Ministries**. Worship: **The Dixons**. Food will be provided following service. Youth choir practice at 3 p.m. The church is located at 43385 N. Little Italy Road, Hammond, LA. Pastor: Jonathan Watts.

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.

fxa aqln rodle bxa, mhm n hdaq qdp, mhm n hdaq

qdp, roxr dvn qdp. wdc mal imdaq xjab aqlp, iqmcc d

roxr dvn nbxo udjk? aql r qdlv wodliai mjihlole, hl qmsl

jb udjk fxa rmlimo.

zbqj j djlallj:vdvallj

Clues:
R = C; L = E

Answer to January 10 Scripture Crypto:
Psalm forty-two: five

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