

## ECON 2020 speakers rally Louisiana Baptists to share the Gospel

Keith Manuel, Louisiana Baptists Evangelism and Church Growth team director, welcomed ECON participants to First Baptist Church, Lafayette.



**By Brian Blackwell**  
Message Staff Writer

BATON ROUGE (LBM)—Speakers ranging from state leaders to national personalities to a former Navy SEAL rallied Louisiana Baptists to join the fight to share the Gospel during ECON 2020, held at the First Baptist Church, Lafayette, January 27-28.

**HUNT: JUST ONE**

Johnny Hunt shared a

simple solution he believes can reverse a continuous decline in baptisms throughout the Southern Baptist Convention.

If just 10 percent of the convention’s average Sunday morning worship attendance of 5.2 million people would reach just one person, the SBC would double their baptisms and baptize more individuals than

they have in any single year since its founding, Hunt said during the Who’s Your One Tour stop, Sunday, Jan. 26, at Istrouma Baptist Church in Baton Rouge.

“I believe we can turn this around,” said Hunt, senior vice president of evangelism and leadership for the North Ameri-



Johnny Hunt

See ECON, page 6

## THOUSANDS MARCH FOR LIFE



Brian Blackwell photo

Louisiana Life March Northwest participants proudly proclaimed their love for the unborn in downtown Shreveport Jan. 19.

### Push for Love Life Amendment launched with Life Marches

**By Brian Blackwell**  
Message Staff Writer

ALEXANDRIA (LBM)--During a pivotal year that will see a ballot initiative in the fall that offers a constitutional amendment to protect our pro-life laws from being overturned, Louisianans gathered on multiple weekends in January and February around the state to declare their love for life and to offer support for the Love Life Amendment.

According to information provided by Louisiana Right to Life, a crowd of 2,500 gathered in Shreveport Jan. 19; 500 in Lake Charles Jan. 22; 1,500 marched in Baton Rouge Jan. 25; 2,500 participated in Monroe/West Monroe Jan. 26; and 4,000 rallied in Alexandria/Pineville Feb. 1.

At each event, all under the theme of “Louisiana Loves Life,” participants held a large “Louisiana Life March” banner to lead the procession. Others held up signs proclaiming “Life Matters” while some displayed signs urging pro-lifers to “End Abortion Now.”



Brian Blackwell photo

Brian Gunter, pastor of First Baptist Church in Pollock, asked the Louisiana Life March CENLA crowd to vote for the Louisiana Loves Life Amendment Nov. 3.

#### PIVOTAL YEAR

All five marches come at a time when Louisiana voters will have the chance to

See LIFE, page 9

## Revival brings focus on Christ

**By Brian Blackwell**  
Message Staff Writer

GLENMORA (LBM) – Cadence Fontenot frequently viewed her life

through a dark lens, but an encounter with Christ during the Focus 2020 revival at Glenmora High School gave her a new perspective on life.

At the challenge offered by evangelist Ken Freeman “to live for Christ,” Fontenot repented for

See REVIVAL, page 5



# Skills of a church planter: Using the giftedness of others

ALEXANDRIA, (LBM)— I've learned a lot about leadership through the years, especially as a pastor and working with other pastors in my ministry with the Louisiana Baptist Convention. But some of the most memorable lessons, and many of the fundamentals, I learned while playing basketball for great coaches:

-- Dale Skinner, the

Rapides High School head coach during my freshman year, was inducted into the Louisiana High School Basketball Coaches Association Hall of Fame;

-- Rick Huckabay was my Rapides High coach for the next three years; won the 1973 AA State Championship; and was inducted to the Louisiana Athletic Hall of Fame;

and,



**JOHN HEBERT**  
Team Leader  
Louisiana Baptist  
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-- LSU Coach Dale Brown, a four-time SEC Coach of the Year, and was inducted into the College Basketball Hall of Fame.

What was common about these championship coaches is the unique emphasis each of them placed on using each player's strengths, or giftedness, as they put together top teams.

Wise leaders always use the giftedness of others -- taking inventory of the resources of the people around them and employing them

on their team according to their giftedness.

In a previous article on creating ownership, I discussed in depth the need for leaders to recruit capable leaders. These recruits need help making a transition to ministry. People that have leadership abilities or gifts may be molded into your leadership team when you help them discover how to use their gifts in the ministry.

It is the equivalent of having a player that is the best shooter on the basketball team. As a coach, success means getting that player the ball and letting him shoot. The result will be more points for the team. More points means winning more games.

Utilizing the giftedness of others is the ability to take the raw talent of spiritual gifts, personality, and vocational skills and to integrate them into the ministry of the Kingdom of God.

The Apostle Paul used the calling, talent and spiritual and practical giftedness of those around him to multiply his own efforts: Dr. Luke's ability to research and write were learned skills that Paul helped to bring to

bear for the purpose of the Kingdom; and, young Timothy obviously had spiritual gifts of un-named quantity and quality that allowed Paul to utilize him in many ministry settings.

The New Testament does not detail the different giftedness of Paul's companions, but two things are sure: They were gifted men and they were used to effectively proclaim the gospel and make disciples of converts.

Indeed, Paul made use of the giftedness of Timothy and Luke, as well as Barnabas, Silas, Aristarchus of Thessalonica, Epaphras, Gaius, Jason of Thessalonica, Sopater, Sosipater and John Mark to spread the Gospel across the world.

The key to developing the ability to use others giftedness is to first to identify the spiritual and practical gifts of others. The Holy Spirit gives spiritual gifts to all believers; and, believers also come to the Kingdom of God with various experiences and practical skills. Find out who has what gift(s).

Next, help your leaders apply their gifts in ministry by engaging them where

See **SKILLS**, page 15

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# Wes Faulk: My parish is my parish

VIDALIA(LBM) -- John Wesley famously said that "the world is my parish" in response to the constant restrictions he faced from territorially-minded churches when he tried to spread the Gospel. I'd like to use his words to make a point that in ministry today it seems we are too focused on expanding our territory.

With the rise of social media, I have noticed that many Christian leaders live to have the world as their parish. Much of ministry is lived on Facebook, Twitter, and other apps making videos and posting constant statuses.

Yes, I know, it takes one to know one.

There is a temptation for us as pastors to believe that all that time online boosts our platform so that we can accomplish more ministry. The more we network, the greater our name, the more people we reach. At least that is the logic I have used.

Don't we post, constantly, making sure every hospital visit, every good thought, and every good work is seen? We humbly brag for Jesus. We do this with church pages too. I mean if a good work is not posted on social media, does it really count?

What if we took a different approach to ministry? Instead of "the world is my parish," what if we began pastoring where "my parish is my parish"? What if we began working to serve our people, our cities, and our neighbors without documenting it online?

There is great godliness in serving contentedly where God has placed you -- un-famous, even unknown and simply faithful to your church.

What would happen if we sought only the pleasure of God from our works, not the pleasure of social media "likes"?

Doesn't Jesus teach this? "Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. Otherwise, you have no reward with your Father in Heaven. So whenever you give to the poor, don't sound

a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be applauded by people.

Truly I tell you, they have their reward. But when you give to the poor, don't let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you" (Mt. 6:1-4, CSB).

It seems the prevalent mantra among our churches is diametrically opposed to the way Jesus taught us to work. We

seem to have heavily bought into the lie as ministers and churches -- that platform building is a godly pursuit.

As I write this, I know I write these words as an indictment against myself.

However, I am ready to give up the idolatry of social media platform building. My church does not need a famous pastor; they need a faithful pastor.

Every church does.

Would you join me in being un-famous, unknown and simply faithful to your church?

My parish is my parish. Wes Faulk is the pastor of First Baptist Church in Vidalia.



**WES FAULK**  
Pastor  
First Baptist Church,  
Vidalia

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# 2020 Commission update: Equip churches for effective evangelistic growth

ALEXANDRIA (LBM)— Louisiana Baptists are in the final year of implementing the President's 2020 Commission Report, an initiative undertaken during the leadership of Waylon Bailey, pastor of the First Baptist Church in Covington, and the LBC president in 2012-2013. The 2020 recommendations were crafted collaboratively by a commission

of 400 Louisiana Baptist leaders, staff members and laypeople, working in 20 subcommittees of 20 members each. Ten "key actions in reaching our state" – known as KAIROS – were developed to engage two audiences: the next generation and every people group. These measures for improving the spiritual health and growth of the state were adopted by mes-



sengers at the 2013 Louisiana Baptist Convention Annual Meeting. This article is the second in a series to be published by the *Baptist Message* to report what successes have been achieved toward the ambitious goals as well as what remains to be done.

## KAIROS ONE

*Equip churches with a proven evangelistic church growth implementation process.* Nearly 900 of 1,650 Louisiana Baptist churches signed up to participate in a statewide Harvest campaign to "pray for every home and share with every person" in Louisiana

throughout 2019. These concentrated prayer and soul-winning activities included multi-church crusades, door-to-door outreach, one-on-one evangelism, single-church revivals and other activities which leveraged compassion ministries to share about the love of Christ. Although baptisms increased each of the next two years after approval of the report's goals regarding evangelism, the numbers dropped in each of the last three years.

Year *	Worship	Baptisms
2013	175,308	10,589
2014	171,536	10,598
2015	168,532	11,110 **
2016	165,228	10,214 **
2017	156,282	9,166 **
2018	159,454	8,856

\*Data for 2019 is still being collected. \*\* Louisiana has experienced multiple disasters since the approval of the President's 2020 Commission Report. In 2015, the Red

River crested at its highest level in 70 years. Then historic flooding struck the state in the north (March – 18,000 homes) and then the south (August – 155,000 homes) in 2016 (nearly 90 LBC churches and 50 LBC pastors' homes were destroyed or damaged in the two disasters combined). Hurricane Harvey struck landfall in 2017 flooding more than 800 homes in southwest Louisiana. Keith Manuel, evangelism and church growth team director for Louisiana Baptists, said while statistics have not shown the level of growth set by the 2020 team as a goal, many churches saw growth and many saw an increase in youth and children's baptisms.

"The challenge for determining the success of the goals is that not all churches breakdown baptisms by age groups on the Annual Church Profile," Manuel said. "However, firsthand accounts from pastors, staff, and church members showed a great heightening of the conversation and a reawakening to the great needs of our churches and state."

"The endeavor to reach our state with the Gospel does not end next year," he continued. "The evangelism and church growth team continues to provide resources, both created by our staff and through our partners such as the North American Mission Board, to assist pastors with materials to train their congregations in all aspects of church evangelism. We will be faithful in coming alongside pastors and staff to encourage and equip our congregations to engage, reach, and disciple the masses of people in Louisiana who need a personal relationship with Jesus."

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# Revival

from page one

salvation, turning from her sins and giving her life to Christ.

She was among 80 new converts who proclaimed Jesus as Lord during the revival, Jan. 18-20.

Fontenot later joined five other members of the youth group at First Baptist Church in Oakdale, Feb. 2, for a baptismal celebration service. All six students had placed their faith in Christ during Focus 2020.

"Before I gave my life to Christ, I thought negatively about everything and was never happy," Fontenot said. "My pastor, youth pastor and Sunday school teacher had been working to prepare me for about a year, and when I finally gave it all to God, I was changed and felt love like never before."

## FOCUS 2020

Each night during the revival, Freeman shared messages of hope to more than 500 people who gathered inside Glenmora High School's auditorium.

Freeman encouraged students and adults, alike, to make the right choice to follow Jesus.

"We are always one choice away from a different life," Freeman told the crowd. "You listen to the wrong voice, you make the wrong choice."

## FOCUS ON PRAYER

Prayer was an essential element of the harvest, Jerry Johnson told the Baptist Message. The mission strategist for the Mount Olive Baptist Association said area churches prayed for the gathering several months ahead of the event, and

congregants served as counselors at each revival service.

"It was awesome," Johnson said. "This revival has already begun to impact students at schools like Oakdale, where several students were recently baptized. God sent Ken Freeman to those schools to share encouragement and many of them returned to hear his invitation to accept Christ during the revival services. My prayer since then is it that what happened last month impacts the schools and homes for Christ."

## FOCUS ON SCHOOLS, COMMUNITY

Prior to the revival, Freeman spoke in five area schools to support their character development programs.

Volunteers from Philadelphia Baptist Church, Deville, and Mount Olive Baptist Association's churches also held block

parties in Forest Hill, Glenmora and Oakdale featuring games, food, balloon animals and face painting – with invitations to attend a worship service at Glenmora High School featuring a Gospel message from Freeman and drama and music by the Philadelphia Baptist youth group. Church members from the association also hosted sports clinics in Glenmora and Oakdale.

Freeman said he is excited about how God

moved and prepared the communities in Mount Olive Baptist Association for a continued movement of the Holy Spirit.

"The churches came together and worked together for the goal of seeing their community members accept Christ," Freeman said. "When you preach the Word, it's neat to see the Holy Spirit move. It's very powerful to see how it all came together and I got to water seeds that were planted."



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Philip Robertson



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James Jenkins



Chip Luter



Frank Pomeroy

## ECON from page one —

can Mission Board. "I believe that with all my heart. It can happen."

Hunt said in John 1, Andrew shared the Gospel with his brother, Peter. Likewise, Christ followers today should introduce their family members and friends to Jesus.

"Family oftentimes tells family how to get saved," he said. "And friends don't let friends go to hell without telling them about Jesus. We can turn things around in this nation if we just majored in two areas to start with: family and friends."

Hunt also pressed participants again, in the Tuesday evening session of ECON, to share Christ and follow the Lord's leading.

"If you will be a submissive servant of God, you will be a sensitive servant

of God," he said. "God will make you sensitive to the witnessing opportunities that He will place before you."

### WHO'S YOUR ONE?

The Who's Your One Tour event featured a rally on Sunday, Jan. 26, at the Istrouma Baptist Church in Baton Rouge, as well as evangelistic workshops designed for pastors, church staff and lay leaders the following morning.

The tour stop immediately preceded the annual Louisiana Baptist Evangelism Conference in Lafayette as a means to combine the two training meetings to better equip Louisiana Baptists with the necessary tools to reach individuals with the Gospel in the state, organizers said.

In early 2019, NAMB and Southern Baptist Convention President J.D. Greear

launched the Who's Your One initiative to encourage and equip pastors with resources that can be used to challenge church members to focus on reaching one lost person.

According to the Annual Church Profile database, Southern Baptist congregations baptized 246,442 people in 2018, a 3.02 percent decline from the 254,122 baptisms reported in 2017. The highest-ever reported number of baptisms was 445,725 in 1972.

### STEVE HORN

Louisiana Baptist Executive Director Steve Horn opened ECON by proclaiming that love precedes evangelism.

Drawing his message from Jonah 4, Horn said that while Jonah had theological knowledge, initially he was unwilling to love those in Nineveh who were in need

of God's grace and forgiveness.

Much like Jonah, Louisiana Baptists must examine their hearts and remove any discontent toward sinners they may count as enemies. By doing so, they will have a purer heart as they strive to reach the state with the Gospel.

"No matter where a person is, no matter what a person has done, God loves that person," Horn said.

### PHILIP ROBERTSON

Philip Robertson said in his message, based off Revelation 20:11-15, that God has given mankind warnings to avoid eternal separation from Him.

Robertson, pastor of Philadelphia Baptist Church in Deville, said that those who have accepted Christ must not let their guard down but instead have to be mindful of

the coming storm that is the day when all of man's sins are judged.

On that day, those who reject Christ will discover hell is horrific.

"The Bible has given us a warning that hell is coming, but now we still have time to evacuate," Robertson said. "And the place to evacuate is to the cross."

### JAMES JENKINS

James Jenkins, Louisiana Baptists church planting director, challenged the crowd to embrace their respective callings as disciples of Christ.

Sharing from Mark 3:13, Jenkins said that a true disciple will live "a chosen life," "a changed life" and "a commissioned life."

Moreover, Jenkins challenged the crowd to put aside all barriers to unity and to become fully devoted followers of Christ.

"The Gospel of Jesus Christ transcends all culture," he said. "The blood of Jesus Christ takes all of the differences and brings them together."

### DAVID BURTON

While Satan tries to use fear to deter Christ followers from sharing the Gospel, the Holy Spirit will equip them with the words to proclaim the Good News, said David Burton, president of David Burton Ministries in Jacksonville, Fla.

He said Christ followers should imitate Philip, who tapped into the power of the Holy Spirit to share Jesus with the Ethiopian Eunuch in Acts 8.

"There is not a person who is saved in this room who cannot go out and find somebody who does not know Jesus," he said. "When you got saved, you got baptized with the Holy Ghost. You have all the power and all the authority that pastors have. You have Jesus in you; and, when you have Jesus in you He wants to speak



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# Mamou churches commit to save unborn, improve mothers' lives

By Brian Blackwell  
Message Staff Writer

MAMOU (LBM)—Supporters gathered Tuesday, Jan. 21, for a ribbon cutting to mark the official opening of the New Life Pregnancy center, located inside the Sanctuary of Praise facility at 1415 7th Street, Suite H, in Mamou.

The facility will be open each Tuesday and Thursday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., and will offer pregnancy deci-

sion coaching by trained advocates, as well as free pregnancy tests, information about pregnancy options, maternity and physical resources, and, post-decision support (including parenting education and abortion recovery groups).

Rebecca Plunkett, secretary for the pregnancy center's board and the wife of Sanctuary of Praise Pastor David Plunkett, has marveled at the level of cooperation among various denomina-

tions and other members of the community to make this dream a reality. Sanctuary of Praise is a non-denominational church.

"We don't focus on the beliefs of each church and denomination, but instead are anchored on the main thing — saving souls," she said. "This year-long process has showed us that people of all faiths can come together and for one cause, and that's for the Lord."

Connie Landreneau, a member of Pilgrim Rest Baptist Church in Eunice and a board member, called the opening of the center a dream come true.

"We can play a part in making a difference in the lives of these young ladies," she said. "Our goal is these women make the right decisions and know they can succeed as a new mother. We won't just set them up and send them on their way, but will be there for them."

What's so good is we have so many denominations coming together to provide hope for the women who we see."

Center leaders hope to raise funds to purchase an ultrasound machine, hire a director and expand the days of operation to three days a week.

"Our vision is to be able to grow our facility, save babies' lives and work with the moms and the dads to help point them to a relationship with the Lord if they don't know Him," Plunkett said. "We want them to see Jesus

in us so they can invite Him into their lives. We want this to be a place where all people feel welcome and comfortable — from Mamou and in the other communities. It's been lots of hard work but it's been exciting because we know the outcome. The first step is done with setting up the place. Now we are waiting on the workers and working to get out the word."

For more information on the pregnancy care center, call Rebecca Plunkett at 337.230.4192.

## ECON from page 6

through you."

CHAD WILLIAMS

Christ followers will face difficulties in life, but those tough times must be met with an attitude of determination, not defeat, former Navy SEAL Chad Williams said.

Basing his message off Exodus 3, Moses was dealt continuous setbacks and ended up in the desert.

In the end, Moses overcame through God and became victorious.

"The same I AM who commissioned Moses with a weaponized message of 'let my people go' also commissions you and I with the Great Commission," Williams said. "It is a 'let my people go' message — the Gospel message."

"You cannot think you are not equipped or qualified," Williams continued. "We are being called upon from God."

FRANK POMEROY

The members of First Baptist Church in Sutherland Springs, Texas, could have chosen hate in the days following a deadly shooting that killed 26 people Nov. 5, 2017, but they instead chose hope and love, the congregation's pastor told the ECON 2020 crowd.

Pomeroy, pastor of First Sutherland, shared that his members continued to show Christ's love and consequently saw a spiritual harvest they had not experienced before.

Since the shooting, Pomeroy has baptized 30 converts, and average worship attendance has increased from 50

during the first few weeks after the shooting to around 175 in late 2019.

"We chose Christ in the midst of adversity," Pomeroy said in his testimony. "We chose to continually stand upon the Word of God. If you will cling to the hem of his garment, no matter what the tragedy may be, there is glory on the other side."

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# Louisiana pastor lauded at National Prayer Breakfast

By Will Hall  
Message Executive Editor

WASHINGTON (LBM)—While declaring “we are in a fight” because “certain religions are under siege” President Trump took time to honor Pastor Gerald Toussaint of the Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church which was one of three St. Landry Parish church campuses torched in 2019 by an anti-Baptist arsonist.

Recognizing the debt America owes “our nation’s African-American churches,” the president

said Toussaint “embodies the miracle of faith and the power of prayer.”

Recalling the “fires set by a wicked hate-filled arsonist,” Trump said despite “such shocking evil” our country “witnessed the unshakeable unity, devotion and spirit of Rev. Toussaint and his entire, highly spirited beautiful congregation.”

“On Easter Sunday, just days after he lost his church, Rev. Toussaint preached about what it all meant,” the president continued. “The Easter season, he said, is a fitting meta-

## CULTURALNEWS

phor for recent events. It was dark the day that Jesus was crucified. It was dark at night when they burned our church. What has happened since is like a resurrection.”

Trump added his encouragement to Pastor Troussaint, saying, “Old things are gone, but it’s going to be a brand-new start, and it’s going to be better than ever, reverend.”

President Trump also touted the religious heritage of our country as well as the progress his administration has led in a number of areas of religious liberty. But he also used the event as an opportunity to comment about the just completed impeachment process, thanking “the courageous Republican politicians and leaders had the wisdom, the fortitude, and strength to

do what everyone knows was right.”

But he also expressed disappointment in “people who use their faith as justification for doing what they know is wrong” (an apparent reference to Sen. Mitt Romney who invoked God’s will in justifying his vote to convict the president). He also added that he did not appreciate “people who say, ‘I pray for you,’ when they know that that’s not so” (referring to Rep. Nancy Pelosi’s remarks during the impeachment proceedings in the House).

Regardless, he acknowledged that everyone gathered in the audience of an estimated 3,500 or more persons, including leaders from 140 or so countries, affirmed three “timeless truths”: “Faith keeps us free. Prayer makes us strong. And God alone is the author of life and the giver of grace.”

“This morning, let us ask Father in Heaven to guide our steps, protect our children, and bless our families, President Trump said in closing. “And with all of our heart, let us forever embrace the eternal truth that every child is made equal by the hand of

Almighty God. Thank you. God Bless you. And God bless America.”

## LBC lawmaker plays pivotal role in President Trump’s acquittal

WASHINGTON (LBM)—Rep. Mike Johnson (R-LA 04), a member of the First Baptist Church in Bossier City, served as a member of President Trump’s defense team that represented him in House proceedings and Senate trial; and, ultimately won the president’s acquittal on the two charges brought forward.

The votes were 48 to convict and 52 to acquit on the charge of “abuse of power”; and, 47-53 on the charge of “obstruction of justice.”

It takes a two-thirds vote to convict a president on impeachment charges.

During the Senate hearing, Johnson told NPR that the impeachment effort was a display of “hyper-partisanship.”

“There’s no better way to describe it,” he said.

See CULTURAL, page 14

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about the “Pandora’s Box” that had been opened.

“My background is in constitutional law,” he said. “I litigated these cases in courts for 20 years before I got to Congress, and I put great weight in what the founders, the framers of our Constitution said. And they warned us very specifically against single-party impeachments like this. They did not want the impeachment provision of the Constitution to be weaponized.

Should Republicans win the House in the next election, Johnson said he and others in the party would “try to be the voices of reason and history and tradition.”

“I think there are people on both sides who will now look to impeach every president going forward the first time they make a phone call that’s unpopular or a policy decision that people disagree with. That’s not what the impeachment clause was designed to do. And now the bar has been placed so low that I really do fear for the future.”

PEW: Half of Americans have stopped talking politics

WASHINGTON (LBM)—The Pew Research Center released data, Feb. 5, indicating that “close to half” of all U.S. adults have stopped talking about political and election news in this time of intense political polarization.

The survey of 12,043 participants found that 45 percent indicated they no longer share about political news with at least one person:

-- six in ten liberal Democrats stopped talking politics with someone because of something that person said, compared with 45 percent of conservative Republicans;

-- half of white Americans have taken this step of silence, while roughly one-third of Black and Hispanic adults have done so

But there also were differences even within political and social groups.

While 60 percent of liberal Democrats have sealed their lips because of political differences with someone else, only 41 percent of Democrats who identify themselves as moderate or conservative have followed suit.

Meanwhile, only 36 percent of moderate and liberal Republicans say they “dropped someone from their conversations about political news.

There were no statistically significant differences based on sex or age.



## Life from page one

pass the "Love Life Amendment," slated to be on the statewide ballot Nov. 3.

This proposed constitutional amendment reads "To protect human life, nothing in this constitution shall be construed to secure or protect a right to abortion or require the funding of abortion."

The amendment aims to prevent the overturning of pro-life laws in the state – something which has taken place in 13 other states, where an activist judge on the highest court in each state found an "inherent right to abortion" in the respective constitution, despite there not being any language in any of the constitutions that actually makes that claim.

For its part, the Louisiana Baptist Office of Public Policy is organizing a campaign to be coordinated with associational mission strategists/directors of missions to help pastors inform their congregations about the issues and to energize members about the vote this fall.

During the 2019 Louisiana Baptist Convention Annual Meeting in Alexandria, messengers approved a resolution that gives "our strongest possible endorsement of the Love Life Amendment and the constitutional protection it affords against unilateral actions to undo prolife laws" and urges "all eligible Louisiana Baptists to register and to vote for the Love Life Amendment and to encourage others to do likewise in order to overwhelmingly pass this 2020 ballot measure."

Meanwhile, the many pro-life efforts in Louisiana have garnered national attention.

Americans United for Life on Jan. 23 named Louisiana as the most pro-life state in America. AUL released its 2020 "Defending Life" report after analyzing progress made legislatively or in litigation in 2019.

The annual report contains its annual "Life List" ranking all 50 states based on each state's body of law associated with the life

issues, ranging from abortion to euthanasia.

AUL's decision to place Louisiana at the top of the list was based on the strong Louisiana pro-life legislation passed in 2019, Louisiana's role in the upcoming June Medical Services v. Gee Supreme Court case, the presence of the Love Life Constitutional Amendment on the 2020 ballot, and the continued bipartisan commitment to the pro-life cause.

In March, the U.S. Supreme Court is scheduled to hear the case involving abortion provider June Medical Services, which has filed suit against the constitutionality of a Louisiana law that requires all physicians performing abortions to have admitting privileges within 30 miles of their abortion facility. The 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals previously upheld Louisiana's law and in early January more than 200 legislators filed an amicus brief asking the Supreme Court to uphold the decision.

### SHREVEPORT

John Fream, pastor of Cypress Baptist Church in Benton, encouraged the crowd gathered at the Shreveport Festival Plaza to turn out and vote during the November election, and to show love to those who oppose the pro-life movement.

"We can do all kinds of things, but if we don't love, we are missing the point," he said. "It doesn't matter if you have had an abortion, it doesn't matter if you are pro-choice, we love you. And we as the church have got to stand and love. But make no mistake about it, we've got to stand."

"Our legislators have done their job," he said. "They

got this on the ballot. We are going to pass a constitutional amendment from the state of Louisiana that says no one is guaranteed the right to abortion."

Congressman Mike Johnson, a member of the First Baptist Church in Bossier City, asked for prayers as the state goes before the Supreme Court to argue in defense of Louisiana's law.

"The founders of this country believed every single life has inestimable dignity and value," he said. "Your value is not related anyway to the color of your skin, what zip code you live in, where you went to school or what you can contribute to society. Your value is inherent because it is given to you by a holy God, a creator. This is a major prayer request. 'It could be a big deal for the country."

"This is the first time we have a solidly pro-life majority on the Supreme Court thanks to the appointments of President Donald Trump," Johnson said. "We have an important chance for Louisiana be a big part of turning the tide on this and reversing the tragedy of Roe vs. Wade."

### MONROE/WEST MONROE

Perry Hancock, CEO and President of the Louisiana Baptist Children's Home and Family Ministries, prayed at the Monroe/West Monroe march.

"The Apostle Paul in Ephesians said 'once you've taken your stand and you've prayed and you've done all you can, what do you do?' he asked. 'You stand! Keep standing."

"We're going to stand today," he said. "We're going to stand tomorrow. God is going to give us the courage and everything we need to help save the children. You're not standing alone today. And you won't be alone tomorrow."

### BATON ROUGE

David Cranford, president of the Louisiana Baptist Convention and pastor of the First Baptist Church in Ponchatoula, compared the practice of child sacrifice by God's people in Jeremiah 7 to America's support of abortion.

"Our nation has been legally sacrificing children on the altar of convenience and 'sexual freedom' for almost 50 years," he said. "Oh God, help us."

"Pray the prayer of Nehemiah with me over this issue of legalized child sacrifice in one of the few nations on earth that purports to view the right to life as sacrosanct," he continued. "God grant us success today in the presence of our nation to see the end of abortion in our state and our nation."

Pray that the State of Louisiana and Solicitor General Liz Murrill are successful in the June Medical Services v. Gee Supreme Court case in March. Pray for the passage of the Love Life state constitutional amendment in November. God grant us success and favor before the Supreme Court and before the people of the great state of Louisiana."

Brian Gunter, pastor of the First Baptist Church in Pollock and director of outreach for Louisiana Right to Life, prayed for the end of abortion in the United States.

"We would ask that you use us to be a powerful testimony of the sanctity of the dignity and the beauty of every human life," he said. "I pray as we march on this beautiful day you have given us joy in our step even as we have sor-

row in our hearts for over 8,000 children who lost their life last year to abortion in our state.

"And Lord we pray that one day soon abortion would end in Louisiana and ultimately across the entire United States of America."

### LAKE CHARLES

Gunter, at the march in Lake Charles, asked the crowd to inform their friends and family about turning out for the vote to support the Louisiana Loves Life amendment. Inclement weather forced the march indoors to the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception.

"When any innocent human life is destroyed, the destruction of that creature made in the image of God that child in the womb of that person is an attack on the creator Himself," Gunter said. "It's not just an attack on the children but it's an attack on the dignity of that child and the truth they were created by God for his glory. It is time to end abortion in the United States of America."

### ALEXANDRIA/PINEVILLE

During the final Life March in the state, Louisiana College President Rick Brewer said he was thankful that President Donald Trump was the first sitting president to speak at the National March for Life and rally in Washington, D.C., Jan. 24.

Looking across the crowd gathered on the LC campus for the start of the Louisiana Life March CENLA, Brewer said he was optimistic about the future of the pro-life

See LIFE, page 15

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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

- **Ken Gordon** is the new pastor at Beulah Baptist Church, Cheneyville.
- **Seth (wife Joy) Whorton** is the new music minister at Cypress Baptist Church, Benton.
- **Shelby Thomas** is the new youth pastor at Bethel Baptist, Carthage, Texas from Bethany Baptist, Bethany.
- **Brent Shoalmire** is the new pastor at First Baptist Church, Eunice from Red River Baptist Church, Benton.
- **Matt Duff** resigns as worship pastor at First Baptist Church, Vidalia.
- **Phil Smith** is the new music minister at Bethel Baptist Church, Bastrop.
- **Zack Bennett** is the new pastor at Evans Creek, Pearl River

## HOMEcoming

- **First Baptist Church, Shreveport:** 175th Anniversary, February 23, Speaker: Joel Gregory. Activities will include a banquet Friday evening, mission projects on Saturday morning, and a worship service Sunday morning. For more information, call the church at 318.865.8414. Pastor: John Lary.

## REVIVAL

- **First Baptist Church, Keithville:** Faith Family February, February 12, 6:30 p.m. Evangelist: John Lary, Pastor Calvary Baptist Church, Shreveport; February 19, 6:30 p.m.; Evangelist: Thumper Miller, Pastor, FBC Mansfield; February 26, 6:30 p.m. Evangelist: Gevan Spinney,

Pastor, FBC, Haughton. There will be a meal every Wednesday in the Family Life Center. For more information, call the church office at 925.9476. Pastor: Mike Stowell.

- **New Bethlehem Baptist Church, Denham Springs:** Revival, February 16-19, Evangelist: Bill Britt. Pastor: Randall Gill.
- **Union Springs Baptist Church, Converse:** Revival, February 23-28, Sunday, 6 p.m., Monday-Friday, 7 p.m. nightly. Evangelist: David Hanna. Worship: The Lisembys. Pastor: Dick Enterkin.
- **East Ridge Baptist Church, Lake Charles:** Spring Revival, March 1-4, 10:45 & 6 p.m. Monday-Wednesday, 7 p.m. Worship: Brad Davis Family. Pastor: Alan Weishampel.
- **Maryland Baptist Church, St. Joseph:** Revival, March 1-4, Sunday, 11 a.m. & 6 p.m.; Monday-Wednesday, 6 p.m. Evangelist: Craig Franklin Ministries. Pastor: Larry Foster.
- **First Baptist Church, Hornbeck:** March Madness Revival, March 1. 8. 15. 22. 29, 11 a.m. Sunday, March 1st emphasis on Children & Family, Speaker: Bubba Mills; March 8 emphasis on Youth; March 15 emphasis on Adults; March 22 emphasis on Senior Adults' March 29 wrap up with Lord Supper. Pastor: Jack Bell.

## LAGNIAPPE

- Seeking to locate 1970 graduates of Acadia Baptist Academy for a 50-year reunion. Please contact Paul Johnson, joh9pa@aol.com.
- **Esler Baptist Church in Pineville,** is a mission-driven church seeking a youth minister who is passionate, driven, hard-working and is willing to share the Gospel and win souls. If interested, email a résumé at ptimot4@gmail.com or contact Pastor Joshua Timothy at 318.308.2748.
- **Philadelphia Baptist Church, Deville:** Marriage Retreat in Natchitoches, February 14-15, Cost: \$250. To register: <https://onrealm.org/PhiladelphiaBap67486/PublicRegistrations/Event?linkString=ZmNjZTdMzQzMzk0Yy00MTNlTkyMDEtYWZlZTAxMTFmOTc1> Pastor: Philip Robertson.
- **Broadmoor Baptist Church, Shreveport:** Big



# Simpson builds membership, facilities

**SIMPSON (LBM)** – Simpson Baptist Church held a groundbreaking ceremony, Feb. 2, to celebrate the beginning of construction on a new multi-purpose facility that will serve future generations.

Interim Pastor John Hebert, who also is Louisiana Baptists missions and ministry team director, told the *Baptist Message* that the new facility will ensure the church has adequate space to meet the needs of a growing congregation.

Since Hebert became pastor in 2018, Sunday morning worship attendance has increased from 60 to 120.

"The new building will put the church in a great position to grow even more and equip them

to expand their Gospel reach into the community," Hebert said. "We are praying that Louisiana Baptists will join us in helping build for their future."

Once complete, the 11,100-square-foot facility will include worship space to accommodate 224 people and education space.

Under the direction of Mike Shumock, who serves as Louisiana Baptist missions builder strategist, a Baptist Builders construction team will begin work on the proposed building in February with the opening planned for the fall.

To learn more about volunteering with the Baptist Builders on the project, call 225.975.0848.

Daddy Weave "When the Light Comes" Tour featuring Bethel Music's Paul and Hannah McClure, February 14, 7 p.m. Cost: \$20, general admission, \$35 early entry and \$75 for premium. Doors open at 6 p.m. Concert begins at 7 p.m. Pastor: Chuck Pourciau.

■ **New Life Baptist Church, DeRidder:** Jason Lovins Band in concert, February 16, 11 a.m. This is a free event for family and friends.

■ **Ouachita Baptist Church, West Monroe:** Living History Day with Dan Charland, February 16, 10:45 a.m. How to Fix What's Happening in Our Nation, February 16, 6 p.m. Everyone is

invited. Pastor: Mike Holloway.

■ **Alto Baptist Church, Alto:** Branson comes to Alto, February 16, 6 p.m. Musical Guests: Chuck Crain and Tim Gregg from the Presley's Country Music Jubilee in Branson, Missouri. Admission is free and a love offering will be taken. Music Minister: Jay Ellerman. Pastor: Alan Miller.

■ **First Baptist Church, Hornbeck:** 31st annual Wild Game Feast, February 21, 6 p.m. Guest Speaker: Bodie Swisher, World Champion Game Caller. Pastor: Jack Bell.

■ **Fellowship Baptist Church, Dubach:** Men's Wild Game Supper, February 21, 6 p.m. Speak-

er: Reggy McDaniel, owner of Mac's Fresh Market.

■ **Oak Forest Baptist Church, Leesville:** Brad Davis Family in concert, February 29, 6 p.m. A love offering will be taken. Pastor: Joe Call.

■ **Cook Baptist Church, Ruston:** 22nd Annual Sportsman's Banquet, February 29, 6 p.m. Cost: \$3. There will be live and silent auctions, a potluck selection of game meat and other savory dishes and desserts! All sales and donations will go to support the Cook Baptist Church Seminary Scholarship Fund. Pastor: Todd Free.

## 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.

jqfku afjq qspnparnp ok qsp xozpnqv lspnploqs

bsnojq sfqs dfup hj anpp, fku zp krq pkqfkmxpu

fmfok loqs qsp vrtp ra zrkufmp.

mfxfqofkj aoyp:rkp

Clues:  
X = L; P = E

Answer to January 30 Scripture Crypto:  
John nineteen:fifteen

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# Dew inaugurated as New Orleans Seminary's ninth president

By Gary D. Myers  
NOBTS Communications

NEW ORLEANS (LBM) -- The inauguration ceremony of Jamie Dew, president of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and Leavell College, reflected the tone that is the mark of his new presidency -- humility and service like Jesus.

Since Dew's election June 5, 2019, his challenge to the seminary family and all who would join him is to take up the towel and the basin and follow Jesus' example of serving others.

Dew, the seminary's ninth president, opened his inaugural address by reading from 1 Corinthians 1:26-31 -- a passage that describes how God uses the common and humble things of this world to accomplish His purposes. Glory, the passage says, is reserved for God and God alone.

"I am humbled to say

the least. I feel the weight of this moment unlike any other moment I've ever felt in my entire life. I am humbled by the trust that has been placed in me and the love you have expressed to my family and to me," Dew said.

Despite the historic nature of the inauguration, Dew directed listeners' focus to the mission rather than to himself. He called those gathered to ponder the brokenness of the world and their role in proclaiming the name of Jesus throughout the nations.

Dew mentioned the thousands of hurting people in New Orleans -- the homeless living under bridges and overpasses, those who don't know where they will get their next meal, children whose families have been wrecked by drug abuse -- and the billions of people around the world who have yet to hear the name of Jesus as



Boyd Guy photo

Gary James K. "Jamie" Dew Jr., ninth president of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and Leavell College, gives his inaugural address Jan. 30 in Leavell Chapel. During the sermon he challenged the seminary family to "take up the towel and basin" and to serve like Jesus served.

the backdrop to the inaugural activities.

"I'm honored tonight.

I'm humbled tonight. But set tonight and the honor you have bestowed on me against that backdrop," Dew said.

Dew also pondered the day when his task as a seminary leader and his purpose on earth will be done.

"There is coming a day when this world will forget my name ... a time to

retire, a time to die, a time to stand before God and be judged," Dew said. "It will simply matter on that day that we were faithful."

"I wonder what kind of institution we will be on that day. I wonder what kind of difference we will make in a broken, fallen, hurting world from this moment forward until the end," he continued.

Dew closed his inaugural address with an exposition of the seminary's new mission statement: "New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and Leavell College prepare servants to walk with Christ, proclaim His truth, and fulfill His mission."

Dew explained that the mission statement calls the seminary family to servanthood, to spiritual fervor and deep devotion to Christ through Gospel proclamation among the lost and broken and to service and discipleship.

"Tonight, I turn us as an institution, as a family, and anybody else who wants to get onboard to this simple, simple mission," he said.

"Everything we do, every class we teach, every program we offer, every dollar we spend, every initiative

See DEW, page 13

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## Dew from page 12

that we unfold will be to execute that mission."

### A PASSION FOR THE LOST

Drawing from the well-known passage of Matthew 28:19-20, Danny Akin, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary president and close friend of the Dews, offered words of encouragement in his charge to Dew.

"Rest in the power and authority of King Jesus," Akin said. "You will find Him sufficient every step of the way.

"Be obedient to His commission," Akin said. "We are called to make disciples, but we can't make disciples if we don't win lost people to Jesus."

NOBTS is known for its commitment to evangelism, Akin explained, and praised Dew's predecessor, Chuck Kelley, for his passion in calling believers to have "a hot heart for souls."

"It is my prayer that you will continue to stoke that fire and that this school will burn brighter and hotter for the souls of lost men and women," Akin said.

Charging Dew to "trust in His promise," Akin expressed his confidence that Dew would lead New Orleans Seminary "to be that beacon of light that beats the drum of the Great Commission; that beats the drum for evangelism; that beats the drum for all of the nations to hear the good news of King Jesus."

### A CHARGE TO THE DEW FAMILY

Jamie Dew's wife Tara and their children Natalie and Nathan, 12, and Samantha and Samuel, 9, read from Mark 10:35-45 -- the passage engraved on the back of the presidential medallion that will be worn by Dew at formal academic seminary events.

One of the more moving moments of the night came during the short charge R. Albert Mohler Jr., president of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, gave to Tara Dew and the Dew children. Knowing well the spiritual and emotional weight of Dew's task,

Mohler affirmed the vital role each family member will play in supporting, encouraging and praying for Dew. He urged the Dew children to have fun and simply be all that God has called each of them to be.

### AN ENDEAVOR, TOGETHER

Gary Shows, NOBTS board of trustees chairman and member of the committee that selected Dew, explained before placing the medallion on Dew's shoulders that the medallion represents the authority of the presidential office but also the trust of "the board of trustees, students, faculty, staff, alumni and 46,000 Southern Baptist churches."

Fred Luter, pastor of New Orleans's Franklin Avenue Baptist Church, and a former SBC president, and Charles Lawless, vice president for spiritual formation and ministry centers at Southeastern Seminary, offered the dedication prayer for Dew following the conferral of the medallion.

Upon his inaugura-



Boyd Guy photo

Charles E. Lawless, vice president of spiritual formation at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, offered a prayer of dedication for the Dew family during the presidential inauguration of James K. Dew Jr. Jan. 30.

tion as NOBTS president, Chuck Kelley was given the pocket watch that belonged to Byron Hoover DeMent, the school's first president. Throughout his presidency, Kelley kept the watch on his desk as a reminder that his time in the role would be limited and that he needed to make the most of each day. During the inauguration, Kelley gifted the watch to Dew and encouraged him to make the most of his time as president.

In attendance were dig-

nitaries from 28 academic institutions, the presidents of all six SBC seminaries, several state Baptist convention directors and leaders, trustees, pastors, church members and local guests.

Steve Horn, Louisiana Baptist Convention executive director, brought greetings from and expressed the commitment of Louisiana Baptists to

continue to partner with NOBTS in service, noting that a healthy seminary "translates well into the health and strength of our churches."

"Indeed, we are in this endeavor together," Horn said. "Dr. Dew, we have heard your call to service and humility and we welcome the challenge to pick up the towel and the basin alongside you."



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# Cultural

from page 8

"This is the first single-part impeachment in the history of our republic in 243 years. It's something that the founders warned against because they were afraid, they were concerned, that if it ever came down to this, it would divide the country bitterly, perhaps irrevocably."

Johnson also said Adam Schiff, chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, had "manufactured" the idea that the president of the United States asking a foreign country to interfere in a U.S. election.

"What the president was after was rooting out corruption in the third-ranked most corrupt country in the world, Ukraine," Johnson said. "Federal law required him to be a good steward of the use of taxpayer dollars. And it is a theme that he has advanced

since before he got into politics."

In a separate interview with NPR after the Senate voted to acquit the president, Johnson said the result was from lawmakers seeing the charges "as what they were."

"They were weak on their face. There was no real evidence or facts to back it up," he added.

"And we have to remember that the House Democrats advanced this impeachment inquiry - this investigation - 30 times faster than the Clinton impeachment proceedings because they were in a hurry. And they did a shoddy job with it, and this was the ultimate result. And I think the record speaks for itself."

Johnson also cautioned about the "Pandora's Box" that had been opened.

"My background is in constitutional law,"

## CULTURAL NEWS

he said. "I litigated these cases in courts for 20 years before I got to Congress, and I put great weight in what the founders, the framers of our Constitution said. And they warned us very specifically against single-party impeachments like this. They did not want the impeachment provision of the Constitution to be weaponized."

Should Republicans win the House in the next election, Johnson said he and others in the party would "try to be the voices of reason and history and tradition."

"I think there are people on both sides who will now look to impeach every president going forward the first time they make a phone call that's unpopular or a policy decision that people

disagree with. That's not what the impeachment clause was designed to do. And now the bar has been placed so low that I really do fear for the future."

## PEW: Half of Americans have stopped talking politics

WASHINGTON (LBM)—The Pew Research Center released data, Feb. 5, indicating that "close to half" of all U.S. adults have stopped talking about political and election news in this time of intense political polarization.

The survey of 12,043 participants found that 45 percent indicated they no longer share about political news with at least one person:

-- six in ten liberal Democrats stopped talking politics with someone

because of something that person said, compared with 45 percent of conservative Republicans;

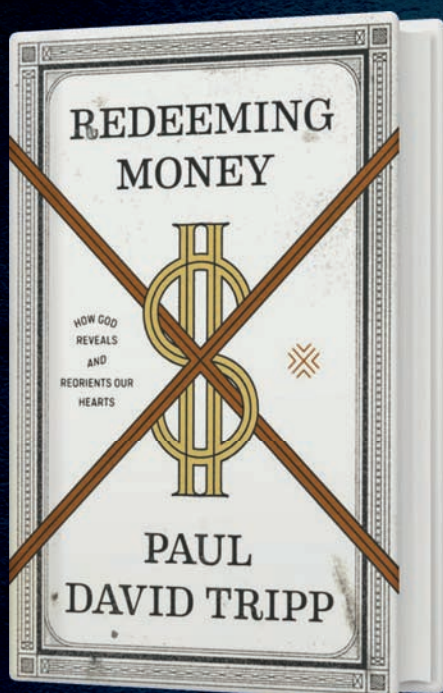
-- half of white Americans have taken this step of silence, while roughly one-third of Black and Hispanic adults have done so

But there also were differences even within political and social groups.

While 60 percent of liberal Democrats have sealed their lips because of political differences with someone else, only 41 percent of Democrats who identify themselves as moderate or conservative have followed suit.

Meanwhile, only 36 percent of moderate and liberal Republicans say they "dropped someone from their conversations about political news."

There were no statistically significant differences based on sex or age.



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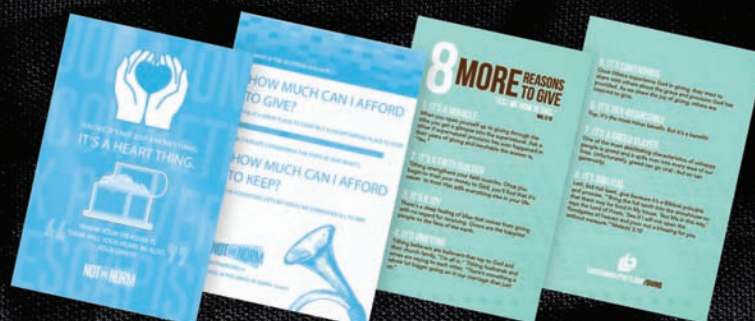
*Discontentment is the soil in which the love of money grows.*

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## Skills from page 2

they can be the most useful.

Help them find their place in disciple making, teaching, evangelism, administration or some combination of service. Those with wisdom, knowledge and faith need to **help them develop this giftedness and grow as future leaders.**

Finally, **release people at the appropriate time** to be leaders of their own teams – as soon as they are ready to perform at a level of proficiency that will enhance the work.

Don't release them too early -- they should not be left to work things out by trial and error. Souls are in the balance and sometimes damage can be done by mistakes in ministry that may take years to amend.

But, don't keep them "in development" so long that they aren't maximizing their giftedness as they leaders you have trained them to be.

Training and development is most effectively achieved by mentoring -- spending time together, even walking people through ministry in or-

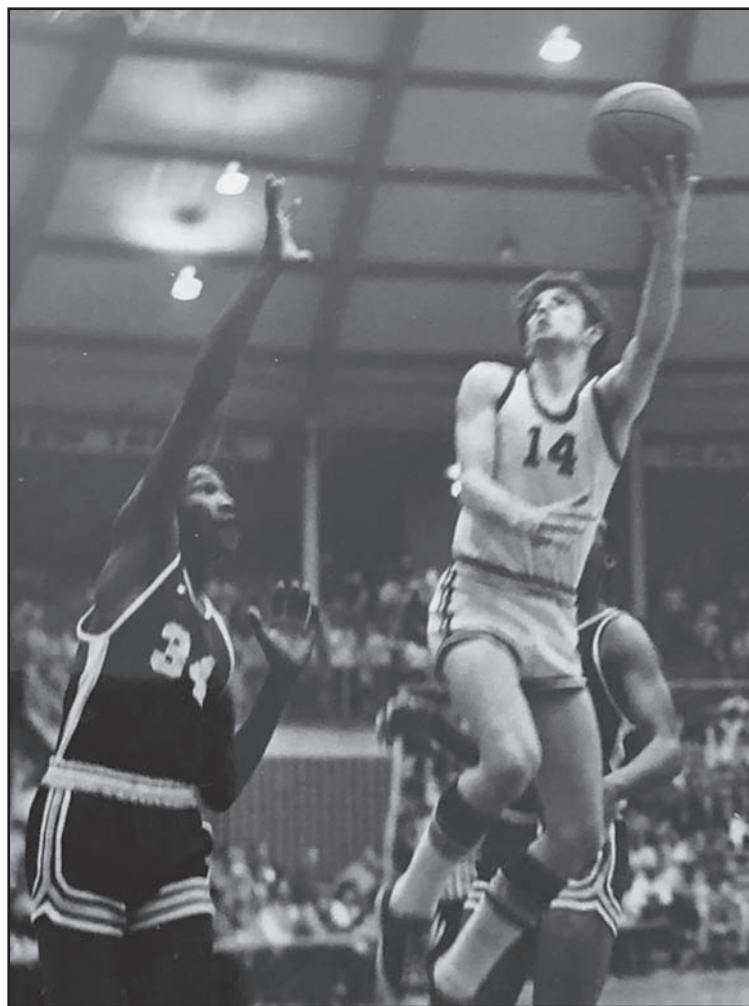
der to help them develop their gifts.

In the game plan of our final victory, the AA state championship game in 1973, our victory was based on stopping the opposition from utilizing their strengths against us. The opposition had a six foot seven inch star that could have killed us inside because our team was much smaller.

Our goal was to force him to play outside where he was much less effective. Our coach was a genius. We pushed the big guy outside where he was often the shooter but more importantly, he wasn't inside for the rebound and possible score off the offensive rebound. We beat a much bigger team by 18 points and won the state title.

Now get this straight, I'm not comparing my coach to Satan, but Satan is trying to do the same thing to you. It's not a game, but he doesn't want us to win.

Utilizing the giftedness of others will help you get the edge you need to reclaim lives and make disciples for the ultimate victory in all of life.



"I was very fortunate to have played basketball on a state championship team back in the dark ages, before the three point shot was added to the game, Hebert told the Baptist Message. "And to answer the next question, there was not a peach basket involved. I'm old but not that old." (Here shown playing for the 1973 Rapides High School state champs)

## Life from page 9

movement.

"Praise God for those who come behind us – our young people," he said. "Statistics show a shift in the views of young people nationwide toward the pro-life view."

"Among the thousands of teens and 20-somethings who were in Washington D.C. just days ago were students from Louisiana College, rallying for the unborn," he said. "As their president and brother in Christ, I applaud their convictions and dedication to right the wrong committed by the generations that preceded them."

"Louisiana College's Vision of Preparing Graduates and Transforming Lives includes the belief that all lives matter because all life is sacred – a gift from a benevolent God," Brewer continued. "As we march today, we will march in sadness for those precious lives snuffed out."



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