



THE BAPTIST MESSAGE

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Horn: Be 'all in' for 2023 SBC Annual Meeting

By Staff

Baptist Message

ALEXANDRIA, La. (LBM) – Louisiana Baptist Executive Director Steve Horn during 2022 Louisiana Baptist Convention Annual Meeting, Nov. 15, at Calvary Baptist Church, Alexandria, encouraged messengers to be “all in” for participation in the 2023 SBC Annual Meeting and related evangelistic events in New Orleans.

Originally scheduled to take place in Greensboro, North Carolina, the

ONLINE

For more in depth reporting on the 175th Annual Meeting of Louisiana Baptists please go to our website at www.baptistmessage.com.

SBC Executive Committee, in April, voted to change the location to New Orleans, which has the meeting space to accommodate a larger crowd.

“By the providential hand of God, the annual meeting of Southern Bap-

tists has been adjusted to come to our state in 2023,” he said. “I don’t believe anything is by accident. Let’s believe that the reason that the SBC annual meeting has been moved to New Orleans is to have maximum Gospel impact in New Orleans and the entire region surrounding New Orleans.”

Horn encouraged Louisiana Baptists to participate in Crossover, a large-scale evangelistic effort held before the SBC Annual Meeting, and the North

See HORN, page 4



Louisiana Baptists Executive Director Steve Horn challenges Louisiana Baptists to be all in for the 2023 SBC Annual Meeting in New Orleans in June.

John Hebert retires as LBC ‘point man’

By Philip Timothy

Managing Editor

ALEXANDRIA, La. (LBM) – John Hebert has always been a team player -- first as a standout basketball player for Rapides High School in Lecompte, where he was named Most Valuable Player at the 1973 “Top 20” state tournament, to the present day. But after years of shunning individual attention, his record of service and personal achievement is in the spotlight after he announced his retirement date of December 31, 2022.

Hebert shared his intention, Nov. 2, to end his 23 years of official service to Louisiana Baptists, the last 11 as team director of the LBC Missions and Ministry team.

“It has been quite a

See HEBERT, page 6

ONCE IN A LIFETIME EVENT



Submitted photo

Since Oct. 26, 512 individuals have accepted Christ during extended revival services at Old Zion Hill Baptist Church. Of those who made decisions, 24 new converts have followed through with baptism.

Spiritual freedom erupting in a town called Independence

By Brian Blackwell

Message staff writer

INDEPENDENCE, La. (LBM) – Two years after seven pastors and other lay leaders in the Independence area began praying for a mighty movement of God to break out, 512 individuals have accepted

Christ during extended revival services at Old Zion Hill Baptist Church, according to local reports.

Now, leaders of Old Zion Hill Baptist and other area churches say they are bracing for what they believe could be the beginnings of a tremendous spiritual awakening in their communities.

“Someone who has been at this church a long time told me they have not seen God move so many before at Old Zion Hill,” Associate Pastor Dave Ketchand told the *Baptist Message*. “The prayer all along has been that we would see an area-wide movement. This has

never been about Old Zion Hill. This has been about God moving in a visible way.”

From the very first revival service, Oct. 17, Ketchand said, he noticed a spirit of expectancy among the community. Each night, the pews were packed out in the 550-seat worship center and participants filled the altar as they cried out to God for their need for Him.

The Holy Spirit continued to move and church leaders and evangelist D.R. Harrison of Kingsport, Tenn., agreed that the revival (originally scheduled through Oct. 21) should be

extended five additional times through Nov. 118 (with a pause in services at various times including weekend services). Additionally, church leaders have baptized 24 of those who accepted Christ during revival services.

“The conviction for sinners and the saved is unlike anything I’ve ever witnessed,” Harrison wrote on his Facebook page. “What is happening here, is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. This has all happened suddenly. There’s been no sensational advertising. No marketing

See SPIRITUAL, page 12



A messenger votes during a session of the Louisiana Baptist Convention Annual Meeting, Nov. 15, at Calvary Baptist Church, Alexandria.

Messengers broaden definition of 'cooperating church'

By **Brian Blackwell**
Message staff writer

ALEXANDRIA, La. (LBM) – Messengers, during the 2022 Louisiana Baptist Convention Annual Meeting, Nov. 15, adopted an amendment to the Louisiana Baptist Convention Articles of Incorporation that allows a church to contribute solely to state causes and still be an LBC congregation.

Previously a church was required to support South-

ern Baptist causes to be considered "in friendly cooperation" with the LBC.

Louisiana Baptist Executive Director Steve Horn, also speaking as a messenger from Calvary Baptist Church, Alexandria, noted he was in favor of the change. Horn said the change is not about redefining the Cooperative Program.

"The Cooperative Program is not Louisiana Baptists' definition," he said. "It is the Southern

Baptist Convention's definition. So, we could not change the definition of the Cooperative Program. We are not seeking to do that with this particular article change. We are merely seeking to keep engaged the churches that have already made the decision and asked us not to send their gifts, through to us, to the Southern Baptist Convention."

Horn said the move is not anti-SBC or anti-CP, but "a conviction that if somebody is giving to Louisiana Baptist Convention causes, they at least ought to be seated as messengers as we continue to keep them engaged" in the LBC.

In addition to keeping them engaged with the LBC, he said the LBC also will be encouraging them "to support Southern Baptist causes."

"This is not money that is being kept solely by the Louisiana Baptist Convention," Horn clarified. "This money is being distributed by our same ratio of giving to our Louisiana Baptist Convention partners such as (LCU) and the Chil-



Brian Blackwell photo

Michael Linton, a messenger and pastor of First Baptist Church, Sulphur, speaks against a change to the Louisiana Baptist Convention Articles of Incorporation that allows a church to contribute solely to state causes and still be an LBC congregation.

dren's Home and all of our entities."

Michael Linton, a messenger and pastor of First Baptist Church, Sulphur, spoke against the change.

"We are by our inception a convention of Southern Baptist church-

See **COOPERATING**, page 3

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Cooperating from page 2

es," he said. "We have been. This, while may be a slight decoupling, is a decoupling from the Southern Baptist Convention. If we vote for this, we become a convention of Southern Baptist Convention churches, independent Baptist churches,

Baptistic churches who are non-denominational or who are part of a different denomination just because they only have to state

they are Baptistic. I believe we are Southern Baptists. I'm a Louisiana Baptist because I'm a Southern Baptist, not the other way around. This is an unnecessary and unhelpful decoupling of our state convention from the Southern Baptist Convention."

Shad Tibbs, a messenger and pastor of Fellowship Baptist Church, Trout, then spoke in favor of the change.

"I do understand what the brother is saying," he said. "Unfortunately, in the time we live in and because some things that are taking place in the Southern Baptist Convention, my church and many more can't support what is going on," he said. "Therefore, if this change is not made, we can no longer be a part of Louisiana Baptists -- and we want to continue to support what Louisiana Baptists are doing. Our hope is that in the future we can support the Southern Baptist Convention

again. So, I speak in favor of this to allow us to continue to support the work of Louisiana Baptists."

News reports indicate there is a growing trend among state Baptist convention congregations to defund SBC entities:

-- Earlier this year, the Missouri Baptist Convention adopted a "Plan B" which allows churches to withhold funds from selected SBC entities without withdrawing from CP support altogether, according to the Missouri Baptist Convention's newspaper,

The Pathway. About 217 congregations were choosing to withhold funds from the SBC as late as Aug. 2.

-- *The Pathway* also reported that the Georgia Baptist Mission Board (formerly the Georgia Baptist Convention) allows congregations to exclude up to two SBC entities and still be in friendly cooperation with the state convention. *The Christian Index*, the news journal of Georgia Baptists, reported that at the end of July more than

See COOPERATING, page 7

CROWD AVERSION

Some are calling it "Earthquake Game 2."

When LSU recently came from behind to beat Alabama in Tiger Stadium, the crowd went wild! It was unbelievable! The crowd's roar was so loud it registered on the seismograph -- for the second time -- the first one following the Auburn victory in 1988. LSU won. The crowd roared and stormed the field. The celebration began.

We have a love/hate relationship with crowds.

We like to be a part of big crowds at concerts and sporting events, but we hate crowds when we have places to go and people to see.

Many of us have "crowd aversion." If we see a crowd, we start looking for a way around it. For example, we want the shortest line at the checkout lane. Despite my best guess, I usually end up in the slowest lane behind a lady who pulls out a checkbook -- a checkbook! Crowds are a hassle at the stoplight, construction sites, the DMV, the gas pump, and the security checkpoint at the airport.

Jesus was no stranger to crowds. They followed Him everywhere. It's amazing He found time to pray and train His followers when He seemed to be constantly surrounded by people. There were times when Jesus withdrew from the crowd, but there were also times when He engaged the crowd.

Matthew records such an instance in chapter 9 of his gospel, "When he saw the crowds, he felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dejected, like sheep without a shepherd." Notice that **instead of ignoring the crowd, Jesus saw the crowd. He didn't look past them or for a way to avoid them.** He saw them. They were real and the sight of them

triggered something inside Him. Matthew notes that Jesus felt for the crowds. He had compassion for them. **They were not an annoyance. They were not keeping Him from His agenda. They were His agenda.** He saw them. He felt for them. *The word compassion in scripture literally means to be moved so deeply that you feel it in the pit of your stomach.*

Jesus saw their true condition. He knew the crowd manifested and magnified the needs of the individuals. They were distressed and dejected. Various translations say they were bewildered, troubled and helpless, confused, harassed, worried, downcast, weary and worn out, abandoned. **He didn't see the crowds as a hassle, but a harvest.** He didn't see the crowd as something to be avoided, but people to be engaged.

The crowds represented the very people Jesus came to save.

On another occasion as a crowd surrounded them, Jesus asked His disciples "where will be buy bread so these people can eat?" (John 6:5)

Could Jesus be asking us, Louisiana Baptists, a similar question?

The crowd is real. Two million spiritually lost people reside in Louisiana and they are all around us. We have what they need -- God's truth. How can we get them what they need? This is the whole point of what we do as an association of churches. It's one thing that separates us from social and civic organizations. *We aren't just*

concerned about how Louisianans will be doing in the next 10 years. We're concerned about where they will be in the next 10,000 years. Marinade on that for a minute. Everybody is going to spend eternity somewhere.

This is why we invest in our multi-media outreach strategy, *Here for You*. **By leveraging current communication platforms, we're engaging the crowd and sharing the truth that can set them free.** Since 2019, *Here for You* has seeded God's truth in 94% of TV households across the state. We've also reached an average of 187,000 people per month via social media and streaming services and more than 3,750 people have indicated a decision for Christ through our partnership with the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association.

Your gifts through the Cooperative Program and the Georgia Barnette Louisiana Missions Offering help us share the Bread of Life with the crowds who are distressed and dejected. Troubled and helpless. Weary and worn out.

The crowd is still there. In front of us. Beside us. Behind us. Don't ignore them. Don't look past them. See them. Pray for them. You don't have to know their names. They may never come to your church. But that is not the point. The need is still there. **Jesus sees them and feels compassion for them -- and as His followers, so must we.**

HereforYou.org

LOUISIANA BAPTISTS

Visit LouisianaBaptists.org/hereforyou and enter luke1423 and learn how to let your community know your church is part of this effort.

Horn from page one

American Mission Board SERVE Tour, an effort that seeks to involve participants in service projects as the foundation for evangelism the weekend before the SBC Annual Meeting. LBC staff will help coordinate sign up for both initiatives. He hopes to have a team from each association to participate in Crossover and SERVE.

Horn said he is praying for 2,023 people to be saved through these evangelistic efforts.

"We know that the harvest is ripe for abundance in New Orleans," he said. "And, now we can say that the workers in that harvest are going to be more than usual at least for this abbreviated time. We cannot miss this strategic opportunity."

ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION CHANGE

During the annual meeting, messengers adopted an amendment



Philip Timothy photo

Messengers to the Louisiana Baptist Convention Annual Meeting vote on amendment to the Louisiana Baptist Convention Articles of Incorporation that allows a church to contribute solely to state causes and still be an LBC congregation.

to the Louisiana Baptist Convention Articles of Incorporation that allows a church to contribute solely to state causes and still be considered an LBC congregation. Previously a church was required to support Southern Baptist causes in order to be "in friendly cooperation" with the LBC.

Louisiana Baptist

Executive Director Steve Horn, also speaking as a messenger from Calvary Baptist Church, Alexandria, noted he was in favor of the change. Horn said the change is not about redefining the Cooperative Program.

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said. "It is the Southern Baptist Convention's definition. So, we could not change the definition of the Cooperative Program. We are not seeking to do that with this particular article change. We are merely seeking to keep engaged the churches that have already made the decision and asked us not to send their gifts, through to us, to the Southern Baptist Convention."

Twenty-seven of about 1,600 Louisiana Baptist congregations have instructed that their cooperative missions and ministries contributions are to be used only in the state with none of their gifts to be forwarded to the Southern Baptist Convention.

The LBC Executive Board addressed the issue during a Sept. 27 meeting, adopting the now approved amendment to the Louisiana Baptist Convention Articles of Incorporation. During the discussion then, Horn said this move would strive to "strike that balance of honoring their requests while at the same time continuing to promote the ideal that we are

better together with our Southern Baptist partners."

MOTION

Dale Goodman, messenger and pastor of Chase Baptist Church, submitted a motion "that the budget committee ... include \$2,500 allotted to the Baptist Nursing Fellowship," and asked that churches and associations be encouraged to promote the organization.

Dwayne Rogers, messenger and pastor of Indian Mount Baptist Church, Greenwell Springs, submitted a motion "that the Louisiana Baptist Convention ... resume referring to Louisiana College (LC) as its legal name "Louisiana College," rather than Louisiana Christian University. Messengers declined the motion.

Tim Post, messenger and pastor of Bethel Baptist Church, Bastrop, submitted a motion "that LBC churches have the ability to negatively designate up to two items and still be considered giving to the Cooperative Program."

Goodman's motion was referred to the Executive Board. The motions by Rogers and Post were debated, but defeated by messengers through raised ballots.

RESOLUTIONS


Messengers approved five resolutions: thanking God for the Supreme Court's pro-life ruling in *Dobbs v. Jackson*; protecting children from permanent physical harm of sex change surgeries and drugs; protecting Louisi-

See HORN, page 7



Philip Timothy photo

Dale Goodman, a messenger and pastor from Chase Baptist Church, speaks for his motion "that the budget committee ... include \$2,500 allotted to the Baptist Nursing Fellowship."



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A central illustration of an elderly woman with short white hair, wearing a pink turtleneck sweater, standing with her hands clasped. She is surrounded by a green circular background. Five circular icons are arranged around her: a heart with a paw print (top left), a bus with a location pin (top), a banana and an apple (top right), a lightbulb above a house (bottom right), and a pill bottle with pills (bottom left).

November 24, 2022 ● www.baptistmessage.com ● Louisiana Baptist Message

Hebert from page one

ride,” Hebert told the *Baptist Message*. “I just feel it is the right time.”

He joined the Louisiana Baptist staff on Oct. 18, 1999, working in the New Work Division/Department under Mike Canady.

“It was basically compassion ministry,” Hebert said.

But he would be challenged six years later when Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans in August 2005 and the storm surge breeched the levees in two places, ravaging the Lower Ninth Ward with catastrophic flooding.

A month later Hurricane Rita slammed into the state.

Reeling from the double whammy, Louisiana Baptists still rolled up their sleeves and went to work, and Hebert was right there working alongside thousands of volunteers.

The response for the victims of Katrina and Rita was massive as the state and numerous Baptist disaster relief volunteers from across the country

responded. Most of the recovery efforts targeted New Orleans, which lost 50 of 140 Louisiana Baptist congregations along with the damages to homes and businesses. But help also was needed in Southwest Louisiana which suffered catastrophic flooding and severe wind damage, and Hebert became the LBC’s “point man on the ground.”

“I was uniquely qualified because I had a business background, trucking experience, knew the world of transportation and I knew a lot of people in and around the state,” Hebert said.

He also had a tenacious work ethic that allowed him to help with coordinating the two massive cleanup operations.

It proved to be good on-the-job training as Hebert would face three major hurricanes in the next three years. In all, Hebert said, he has dealt with 12 major storms, 100-year flooding in Central and Northeast Louisiana and a



Philip Timothy photo

John Hebert (center), who is retiring as Louisiana Baptist Missions and Ministry team director, goes out on a high note during a celebration of the 300th church planted in the state since 2010. Among those who celebrated the occasion during a meal at the Louisiana Baptist Convention Annual Meeting were (left right) Church Planting Strategist Carlos Schmidt, Church Planting Strategist Lane Corley, Missions and Ministry Team Director John Hebert, Director of Church Planting James Jenkins and Ministry Evangelism Strategist Jeff Cook.

1,000-year flood in Southeast Louisiana.

“And we can’t forget two major ice storms not to mention countless tornadoes, tropical storms and depressions,” he said. “Disaster relief has come a long way in Louisiana. Of course, with all these storms we have had a lot of practice.”

Hebert said Louisiana Baptist Disaster Relief has learned on the run, and grown in experience to:

- run statewide disaster relief responses from the Louisiana Baptist Building;
- develop an incident command center staffed by all Louisiana volunteers;
- re-establish a strong volunteer base after losing

so many workers following the 2006 floods; and -- create the only state mission building program in the country.

On Jan. 1, 2011, he went from “point man” to the “guy in charge” when promoted to team director of Missions and Ministry by

See **HEBERT**, page 10

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LOUISIANA BAPTIST FOUNDATION

Cooperating from page 3

180 congregations in the state were bypassing the SBC and that “others have changed their allocations.”

-- Meanwhile, *Baptist Press*, a division of the communications department of the SBC Executive Committee, has noted that “North Carolina, Wyoming and Oklahoma periodically forward church gifts to the [SBC] EC with some type of designation or restriction.”

The backlash against the SBC appears to be related to a number of developments at the national level, including: the SBC Executive Committee’s hiring of

a pro-gay law firm, Bradley of Nashville, and the SBC Sexual Abuse Task Force’s hiring of the pro-gay Guidepost Solutions, both in response to SBC messengers asking for an investigation of the alleged mishandling of sexual abuse accusations; the SBC EC’s waiver of attorney-client privilege and the subsequent departure of the SBC’s long-standing law firm; the abrupt departure of Ronnie Floyd as SBC EC president and CEO; and the SBC Credential Committee’s non-decision at the 2022 SBC Annual Meeting on the issue of ordained women pastors.

Twenty-seven of about 1,600 Louisiana Baptist congregations have instructed that their cooperative missions and ministries contributions are to be used only in the state with none of their gifts to be forwarded to the Southern Baptist Convention.

The LBC Executive Board addressed the issue during a Sept. 27 meeting, adopting the now approved amendment to the Louisiana Baptist Convention Articles of Incorporation that allows a church to contribute solely to state causes and still be considered in friendly cooperation with the LBC. During the discussion, Horn said this move would strive to “strike that balance of honoring their requests while at the same time continuing to promote the ideal that we are better together with our Southern Baptist partners.”



Will Hall, who also serves as editor of the *Baptist Message* and director of the Louisiana Baptist Convention’s Office of Public Policy, honored three individuals who are strong partners with Louisiana Baptists on pro-life and pro-family initiative: Gene Mills, president, Louisiana Family Forum (Shammah’s Courage Award winner); Claire Lemoine, past director, CENLA Pregnancy Center (Esther’s Courage Award winner); and Ben Clapper, executive director, Louisiana Right to Life (Shammah’s Courage Award winner).



Brian Blackwell photo

(from left) Reggie Bridges, pastor of Temple Baptist Church, Ruston, was re-elected president, Chad Gilbert pastor of First Baptist Church, New Orleans, was elected first vice-president and Louis Charrier, a church planter and pastor of five churches, was elected second vice president at the 175th Annual Meeting of Louisiana Baptists Tuesday, Nov. 15 at Calvary Baptist Church in Alexandria. All three were elected by acclamation.

Horn from page 4

ana’s youth from the harms of marijuana; providing a Christian response to those experiencing mental, emotional, relational and addiction issues and expressing appreciation for all who contributed to the annual meeting.

BUDGET APPROVED

Messengers approved the 2023 financial plan based on Cooperative Program contributions of \$17,578,009, a decrease of \$48,127, or 0.27 percent. Cooperative Program projections are based on actual receipts from August 2021 through July 2022.

The allocation formula for distributing CP gifts between the Southern Baptist Convention and Louisiana Baptist causes

remains unchanged, 63.26 percent to support ministries in the state and 36.74 percent forwarded to fund national entities.

OFFICERS ELECTED

Reggie Bridges, pastor of Temple Baptist Church, Ruston, was re-elected president. Chad Gilbert, pastor of First Baptist Church, New Orleans, was elected first vice-president, and Louis Charrier, a church planter and pastor of five churches, was elected second vice president.

All three men were given individual votes of acclamation by the Convention – a single ballot cast by the LBC executive director in view of no opposition to any of the candidates.

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Similarly, with estate planning, some people leave their affairs nice and neat. Others may have minimal plans or don’t create an estate plan at all. Lack of planning can leave a mess for others to tend.

Creating a proper estate plan is not just a matter of ‘who gets what.’ An estate plan should provide a clear directive on how to distribute assets that will provide for the family’s needs. A well-drafted plan should also provide protection for your family and create a legacy of peace among family members.

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Jeffrey Steed, Executive Director
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Hebert from page 6

former Louisiana Baptist Executive Director David Hankins.

EXPANDING THE KINGDOM

"When I took over, I brought a white board into the office and we would use it like my coach (Rick Huckabay) used one when I played basketball. At first, they weren't too sure about it but now they run to the board with updated numbers from any project we are doing."

The Missions and Ministry team has put up some impressive numbers on that board as well as some ambitious goals, such as planting 300 churches in 10 years by the year 2020. Three major hurricanes and two years of pandemic restrictions delayed reaching that milestone by two years, but on Tuesday, Nov. 15, Hebert and his team celebrated the establishment of the 300th

congregation at the 175th LBC Annual Meeting.

"I helped Dr. Hankins to formulate and then initiate this plan which was part of the President's 2020 Commission Report," said Hebert. "The focus of the goal was two-fold, reach New Orleans and do more with people groups, especially the Spanish population which was and is the fastest growing group in the state."

Hebert also is proud of the 10-3-1 strategy the team has developed for church planting.

This simple formula forces leaders to develop a 10-year goal based on a three-year strategy that is driven by a one-year schedule.

"I believe it will become a national strategy," Hebert said.

REACHING NEW GENERATION

Hebert said his team has seen Louisiana Bap-

tists' church plants blossom since 2010, as evidenced by:

- 14,451 professions of faith;
- 5,583 baptisms;
- 2,739 in average worship attendance (composing 12 percent of all current worshippers in LBC churches);
- 116 different cities or towns impacted, and 27 of 32 associations;
- 59 replants.

Hebert also said the diversity of the new congregations (55 percent have been non-Anglo, and 14 different people groups have been engaged) is also a good sign of health and growth for Louisiana Baptists.

Additionally, Hebert said he is extremely proud of the work of the Women's Ministry.

"They are doing a wonderful job of focusing on engaging women, teens, children and preschoolers in missional living as well as securing funding through the Georgia Barnette State Missions Giving. We may actually hit our goal of \$1.7 million this year and it is all due to the efforts of Christine (Gill) and her team. Praise God."



Philip Timothy photo

Louisiana Baptist Missions and Ministry Team Director John Hebert thanks colleagues and other friends for their support during the Missions and Ministry luncheon at the Louisiana Baptist Convention Annual Meeting Nov. 15. Hebert is retiring Dec. 31.

IN GOOD HANDS

Hebert, who has hired all but two members on the present Mission and Ministry team, said whoever takes over will be in "good hands."

"I am totally blessed to have worked with some

of the most talented and gifted people around," said Hebert. "I would put this team up against anyone. They are hardworking, dedicated and focused on serving Louisiana Baptists."

Louisiana Baptist Executive Director Steve Horn took a moment of personal privilege, Tuesday, at the annual meeting to wish Hebert well in his retirement and to give credit where it is due.

"I don't know if many of you know or not, but John Hebert is retiring at the end of this year. While I will miss his humor, his hard work and seeing him daily, I suspect he will find his way back to the building often. I know that you will join me in thanking John for his friendship and years of service to Louisiana Baptists."

A humbled Hebert received a standing ovation from the messengers.

Later at the Missions and Ministry luncheon he told a large crowd that he "gives God all the glory."

Asked what his future plans were, Hebert told the gathering, "I think I will eventually work on church revitalization but for now I have the best squirrel dog I have ever had, and I plan on spending some time in the woods hunting."

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Messengers defeat amendment to abortion resolution

By Brian Blackwell
Message staff writer

ALEXANDRIA, La. (LBM) -- Messengers adopted five resolutions: thanking God for the Supreme Court's pro-life ruling in *Dobbs v. Jackson*; protecting children from the permanent physical harm of sex change surgeries and drugs; protecting Louisiana's youth from the harms of marijuana; providing a Christian response to those experiencing mental, emotional, relational and addiction issues; and expressing appreciation to

all who contributed to the 2022 LBC Annual meeting Nov. 15 at Calvary Baptist Church, Alexandria.

Brian Gunter, a messenger and pastor from First Baptist Church, Livingston, tried to amend the resolution thanking God for the Supreme Court's pro-life ruling in *Dobbs v. Jackson*.

Gunter's proposed amendment read: "RESOLVED, That we urge the Louisiana Legislature and Governor to fully ban abortion by enacting a law of equal protection for preborn children so that

preborn life will be protected from the moment of fertilization by the same laws which protect born persons."

Gunter said while he had no problems with the way the resolution was written he believed it was insufficient.

"The reality is we have not ended abortion in this state," he said. "It is still legal right now for a woman to procure the abortion pill from an out of state source, have it shipped to home and have an abortion at home."

After consulting the

parliamentarian and Convention attorney, LBC President Reggie Bridges told Gunter the ideation of his amendment did not express the "same spirit or purpose of this resolution which is supposed to be for celebrating what the Supreme Court decision was."

Bridges explained that the concept of Gunter's proposed amendment should have been submitted as a separate resolution during the allowed time-frame, Aug. 17 through Oct. 31, and not as an amendment to an unrelated resolution.

Gunter, who served as chairman of the Committee on Moral and Social Concerns last year, told Bridges that having to wait until the 2023 LBC Annual Meeting to submit a resolution would be too late.

"We cannot wait a year to come back for me to present a resolution next November saying that we

stand against the chemical abortion pill by mail," Gunter said. "Babies will die in the meantime and I think it's critical that we decide whether we're only for shutting down the abortion clinics but leaving abortion legal via abortion pill by mail or as Louisiana Baptists we believe that all abortions should be ended. We need to speak to this issue and we can't wait a year to do that."

John Lombard, a messenger from Wardville Community Church, Pinville, said he is a licensed medical professional who has and still does treat women who have had abortions either from the abortion pill or elective abortion.

"I have first-hand knowledge where I have worked, what I have done, to actually treat somebody after we close down the (three) clinics to treat

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See AMENDMENT, page 13

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from page one

campaigns, no billboards, no TV ads, just the Holy ghost doing a supernatural work.

"Preachers, pastors and people are making things right with one another," he continued. "Teenagers are being radically saved and bringing carloads of friends back with them and they are getting saved. Marriages are being restored. Families are being put back together. The hunger for real revival and the disgust for dead religion is unlike anything I've ever experienced."

"God is drawing sinners and cleaning up His people," he said. "I am so humbled that God is letting me see this. This is what we've prayed for. To God be the Glory, great things He hath done."

The revival even extended beyond the walls of the church building, sparking spontaneous

prayer meetings among students at Albany High School. Morgan Crain, an OZHBC member and a sophomore at Albany High, invited dozens of her classmates to the revival services and witnessed more than 15 of them turn to Christ. She also felt led to start a prayer circle with two friends at school and a few days later more than 30 students had joined. Crain said the student body, faculty and staff are experiencing revival.

"People at my school are getting bold for Jesus and many others are getting saved," Crain said. "God has something big planned for us. The revival keeps being extended and God is not through with us."

Area churches have followed up with those who made decisions for further discipleship.

Blaine St. Germain, OZHBC associate pas-

tor of ministry, said his church will offer a variety of immediate discipleship options for the freshly redeemed faithful from the revival: a 10-week class for new believers, an all-day class on Saturday and small groups led by seasoned Christ followers.

"It has been awesome to see God move in the revival services, but we are responsible to make disciples," Germain said. "We are doing what we can to help empower them for a daily spiritual walk."

"We are offering these different options so we will take away any reason for people not to take that next step in the walk in the Lord," he continued. "This is all about building the Kingdom and not building our or any other specific church. We are hoping and believing all churches will have that same heart."

EPHESIANS 1: God chooses us in Christ

This is the first installment of a six-part series for the January Bible study on the book of Ephesians.

By Will Hall, Baptist Message executive editor

ALEXANDRIA, La. (LBM) – While a prisoner in Rome, Paul wrote a letter of freedom to the members of the church at Ephesus, reminding them that "in Christ" God had provided the means of salvation.

Indeed, it is almost a singular emphasis in the first chapter of Ephesians.

This is critical to note because many scholars agree that Paul wrote half of his letter (Chapters 1-3) to emphasize doctrine -- and Paul chose, first, to emphasize as doctrine the means by which God chooses us.

Consider how the translators of the New King James Version presented verses 1-13 (there are only slight differences in the English Standard Version). They concluded that Paul:

-- wrote to the saints who were faithful "in Christ" (v. 1);

-- offered grace and peace from God, specifically mentioning two Persons of the Godhead, "our Father" and "the Lord Jesus Christ" (Son) (v. 2);

-- described redemption as being blessed "in Christ" (v. 3);

-- declared that God had decided -- before the world was made -- that the means of our salvation would be "in Him" (Jesus) (v. 4);

-- defined predestination

as God's plan that we should be adopted as sons through Jesus Christ, then repeated the point by stating we are "accepted" through "the Beloved" (Jesus) (vv. 5-6);

-- specifically stated that our redemption is "in Him" (Jesus) "through His blood" (v. 7-8);

-- explained the mystery of God's will as "in the fullness of time" that all things in Heaven and earth will be unified "in Christ" (vv. 9-10);

-- reemphasized that predestination is God's plan that we gain our inheritance "in Him" (Jesus) (v. 11), and that we must trust "in Christ" if we are to be "the praise of His glory" (v. 12); and

-- concluded that by our trust and belief "in Him" (Jesus) through the "word of truth" ("the Gospel of your salvation"), we are sealed by the Holy Spirit (the third Person of God) (vv. 13-14).

The remaining nine verses express thanks and prayer for the saints in Ephesus and close with a tribute to God's mighty power, which He worked "in Christ."

In Ephesians 1, Paul provides overwhelming doctrinal emphasis upon the means of salvation which is "in Christ." This is the lens Paul provides to view his letter "to the saints who are in Ephesus."

EPHESIANS 2: Redemption is a gift

This is the second installment of a six-part series for the January Bible study on the book of Ephesians.

ALEXANDRIA, La. (LBM) – In Chapter 1, Paul explained redemption as a blessing from God and emphasized Christ as the means by which we receive it.

In Ephesians 2, he built on this doctrinal concept, instructing that this "blessing" is a gift, or the "grace" of God. Again, Paul emphasized that this grace is found "in Christ." Moreover, he contrasted "grace" with "works" to help us understand the enormity of the gift.

This is important to

his refutation of the Judaizers who emphasized the "works" of the law (the legalistic lives Jews had to live, including circumcision of males). In other words, they believed that the people of Israel had to "labor" to make themselves acceptable to God.

Further, in verses 1-10, living in "trespasses and sins" is described as being "dead," and in verses 11-22 being dead is defined as being separated from Christ. Moreover, Paul states three times that salvation is by

See EPHESIANS, page 13

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Faithful servants

First Baptist Church, Independence, recently honored Pastor Mitch Williams, pictured with his wife Lily, for 30 years of service at FBC, Independence and 61 years in the ministry.

Submitted photo



Amendment from page 11

somebody who has taken Cytotec or RU486 (abortion pill) who ended up at my facility, to where we had to provide treatment," he said. "Now we filed no police report. If somebody had injured or killed an individual and had precluded injuries themselves, as health care professionals we would have had to report out. But because our laws allow for women to actually do that without repercussions, we reported nothing. I am a first-hand witness and God is likewise my witness to this reality. We have not ended abortion in La. It is still alive and well."

David Goza, messenger and pastor, Jefferson Baptist Church, Baton Rouge, said that what he was hearing about "this path" with regard to Gunter's motion, is that ultimately it would criminalize women who had abortions and later regretted their decisions.

"I want to make a couple of statements about it and why we should not go any further with this," he said.

"They have been misled, they have been misinformed," Goza explained. "As Christians we know that they are killing babies, they are ending lives. But in their hearts, they believe they are only ending a pregnancy. Someday, Lord willing, Lord willing when they come to their senses, they are going to have to live with their actions forever."

"If Paul found mercy in God's eyes because he did evil in ignorance and unbelief, how can we not proclaim mercy to those who end a pregnancy in ignorance and unbelief," he continued. "I do not disagree with the reasoning of those who are putting forth this action, but I disagree with line of judgment. I do not believe that this is a message that we want to send to an unbelieving world, that we want to imprison those who are in many cases impoverished and underprivileged. We need to show mercy to those who are living in ignorance and unbelief."

After debate, the amendment was defeated.

Ephesians from page 12

"grace" (vv. 5, 7, 8) in contrast to the notion of "circumcision" (v. 11) – a reference to the legalism of the Judaizers in the passage that follows.

Importantly, Paul again emphasized that the means of receiving the gift, or "grace," is "in Christ" (vv. 6, 7, 10, 13); and he made this point through other references to Jesus, such as being "brought near by the blood of Christ" (v. 13), as opposed to being secluded behind a "wall of separation" because of our sins (v. 14).

Finally, he closed this chapter by further reject-

ing the "works" of the law by taking aim at the temple, the center of the perpetuation of the works of the law. In verses 19-22, Paul described Jesus as the "chief cornerstone in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit." Paul told the Ephesians that they, too, were part of the sacred space where the Spirit of God dwells, because of the blessing of redemption, a gift, or the grace received "in Christ."

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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

- **John Hebert**, Louisiana Baptist team leader for Mission & Ministry, will retire effective December 31, 2022.
- **Steven Kelly** is new Associational Missions Strategist (DOM) for the Northeast Louisiana and Morehouse Baptist Association. He is resigning as DOM for Gulf Coast Baptist Association and as pastor of Bayou Vista Baptist Church, Morgan City.
- **Ronny, wife Kathy, Cooksey** is the new pastor at Mandeville First Baptist Church.
- **Ferran, wife Lynda, Bertrand** is the new Associational Missions Strategist for Mt. Olive Baptist Association.
- **Russell Hinson** retiring from Holden Baptist Church, Holden at the end of the year.
- **Pastor Mitch, wife Lily, Williams** was recently honored by First Baptist Church, Independence for 30 years of service at FBC, Independence and 61 years in the ministry.

HOMECOMING

- First Baptist Church, Zwolle: **125th Anniversary**, November 27, 10 a.m. Lunch will be served after the worship service in the FBC Zwolle Activity Building. Former and present members are invited to attend and renew old acquaintances and reminisce about the church's service to the Lord. Pastor: Marty Williams.

REVIVAL

- **South Louisiana Awakening Tent Crusade**, November 28-December 2, 6:30 p.m. nightly. Evangelist: **D.R. Harrison**. Worship: Nightly guests. The revival is located at 10241 Destination Drive, Hammond, La.

- Antioch Baptist Church, Farmerville: **Harvest Sunday**, December 5. Evangelist: **Bill Britt**. Pastor: Rubin Weaver.

LAGNIAPPE

- **Steve Bennett**, Pastor Emeritus of FBC Moss Bluff, is available for conferences, revivals, or supply. Call 337.263.7114
- **Alton Achord** is available for supply. Call 318.715.8874.
- Redeemed Life Fellowship, Patterson: **New Sanctuary Dedication**, December 3, 1:30-3:30 p.m. Refreshments will follow the dedication. The church is located at 4042, Hwy 90, Patterson, La. Pastor: Ronnie Mabille.
- Singer Baptist Church in Singer is seeking a **bi-vocational Southern Baptist pastor**. The position entails conducting Sunday morning, Sunday evening worship services and mid-week prayer service and other pastoral duties, i.e., funerals, weddings, etc. Salary and housing benefits will be determined. Applicants must be a leader who is prayerful, wise and steadfast; must be people oriented and possess strong pastoral skills; have good preaching and teaching and counseling skills; have the ability to assimilate with the people and the culture of First Baptist and possess strong pastoral skills and be passionate about reaching out to young people and families. Contact Jimmy Clark at 337.912.9882 or email résumé to jbc14@bellsouth.net
- Gray Baptist Church, Jefferson, Texas: **Mark Lanier in Concert**, November 20, 6 p.m. The church's address is 150 FM 727, Jefferson, Texas, 75657. Pastor: Roy Davis.
- Calvary Baptist Church, Slidell: **Thanksgiving Feast**, November 20. Worship will be at 11 a.m. and the meals will be at noon. Pastor: John Brown, associate pastor.
- Emmanuel Baptist Church, Shreveport: **EBC Thanksgiving Dinner**, November 20, 5 p.m. Pastor: Lane Moore.
- Mangham Baptist Church, Mangham: **Community Thanksgiving Service**, November 20, 6 p.m. Bring snacks, finger foods and deserts. Pastor: Rick Aultman.
- Bayou Vista Baptist Church, Morgan City: **Annual Thanksgiving Dinner**, November 22, 6 p.m. Please contact the church office with the number from your

- family attending. We will collect canned goods to replenish the food pantry. Pastor: Steven Kelly.
- First Baptist Church, Bossier: **Christmas Kickoff**, November 30, 6 p.m. There will be lots of crafts, carols, food, desserts and plenty of Christmas fun. Join us as we celebrate the beginning of the Christmas season and light up the First Bossier campus. Pastor: Brad Jurkovich.
- First Baptist Church, Pineville: **First@First Business Leader Luncheon**, December 1, noon. Speaker: Sissy Franks, administrator at Philadelphia Baptist Church, Deville. Please RSVP to <https://fbcpineville.secure2.agroup.com/events/firstatfirst/2022-01-05+11%3A50%3A00>. Pastor: Stewart Holloway.
- First Baptist Church, Zachary: **Mark Lanier in concert**, December 1, 10 a.m. Pastor: Jake Roudkovski.
- First Baptist Church, Winnfield: Joseph Habedank in a Christmas Concert, December 1, 7 p.m. Cost: Free. For more information go to FBCwinn.com Pastor: Jerry Pipes.
- **Bethlehem in the Park – A Night in Bethlehem**, December 2-3, 5-8 p.m. at the Jimmie Davis State Park in Chatham. Cost: \$3 per person to park entrance fee. Children ages three and under and seniors 62 and above get in free. Come stroll through the streets of Bethlehem and see the many shops that give a welcome to the weary travelers. Visit the bread shop, clothing store, the candle shop and the music store. Visit a fruit stand or maybe watch a potter make pottery on their pottery wheel. Look upon the Nativity scene and sense the love of God. This annual event is sponsored by the North Central Baptist Association (Jackson & Winn parishes).
- First Baptist Church, Jonesville: **Mark Lanier in concert**, December 4, 6 p.m. Pastor: Todd Whittington.
- Brookwood Baptist Church, Shreveport: The Shreveport Chapter of Reasons To Believe and Brookwood Baptist Church in Shreveport will host an apologetics Zoom event "An Evening With Hugh Ross" on December 6 at 6:30 pm. For further information, contact Mark Riser (markriser1@comcast.net). Pastor: David Rice.
- First Baptist Church, Lafayette: **The Singing Christmas Tree**, December 9-12, Friday, 7 p.m., Saturday, 3 p.m., Sunday, 3 p.m., Monday, 7 p.m. An all-new show with a Cajun flavor is set for this year's presentation of The Singing Christmas Tree at

- First Baptist Lafayette. Bring the entire family to see Acadiana's largest tree with over 100,000 lights and music by the choir and orchestra. Tickets are free but to reserve a spot go to FBCLAF.org/Tree. Evening and matinee performances are available so you can bring the kids. Pastor: James Pritchard.
- Christmas event: **Christmas As It Should Be**, December 9-10 at the Emmett Hook Theater; Saturday 7 p.m.; Sunday 4 and 7 p.m. www.tix.com/ticket-sales/philipandfriends/7107.
- East Jena Baptist Church, Jena: Mark Lanier presents a Christmas concert with Shawn Drewett Family, December 10, 6 p.m. Pastor: Mike Wilkinson.
- First Baptist Church, Mandeville: A Mandeville Christmas – Live nativity, December 10-11, 6-8 p.m. Pastor: Ronny Cooksey.
- Philadelphia Baptist Church, Deville: A Christmas Musical – Did You Know?, December 10-12, Saturday 6:30 p.m., Sunday, 10 a.m., Sunday, 6:30 p.m. and Monday, 6:30 p.m. Tickets are available online at pb-ministry.com/Christmas. Pastor: Philip Robertson.
- Riverview Baptist Church, Alexandria: **Tribute Quartet in concert**, December 11, 6 p.m. Pastor: David Newton.
- Hickory Grove Baptist Church, Coushatta: The Southern Plainsmen Quartet in concert, December 11, 10:30 a.m. Pastor: Mike Fort.
- Bethel Baptist Church, Colfax: **Mark Lanier will present a Christmas concert**, December 11, 11 a.m.
- Mt. Paran Baptist Church, Shongaloo: **Mark Lanier will present a Christmas concert with former with special guest Kingsmen tenor Johnny Par-rack**, December 11, 6 p.m. Pastor: Ed Bryan.
- Calvary Baptist Church, Merryville: **A Night in Bethlehem – Live Walking Nativity**, December

- 16-17, 6-8 p.m. We invite your family to wander through the old town of Bethlehem as we depict the time of the birth of Jesus Christ. The church is located at 424 HWY 111, Merryville, LA. Refreshments will be served, and Children will receive a gift bag. Pastor: Jim Miers.
- Judson Baptist Church, Walker: **Wreaths Across America event**, December 17, 11 a.m. Judson Baptist will honor the 65 veterans buried in the church's cemetery on the that day. Pastor: David Lane.
- First Baptist Church, Pineville (Leconte camps): Christmas in the Country, December 18, 5-7 p.m. There will be food, crafts, hot chocolate, games, live music, jumpers, a live Nativity. We hope you will join us in celebrating the true meaning of the Christmas season. Pastor: Stewart Holloway.
- First Baptist Church, Bernice: **Mark Lanier will present a Christmas Concert with special guest Andrew Ishe, pianist for the group Shenandoah**, December 18, 11 a.m. Pastor: Michael McIntosh.
- Holden Baptist Church, Holden: **Retirement party celebration**, December 18. Pastor **Russell Hinson is retiring after 31 years in the ministry**. There will be a reception for him and his wife, Lisa, immediately following the morning worship service. Everyone is invited to attend. For more information, please contact, Holden Baptist Church, 30130 LA Hwy 441, Holden, LA, 70744 or email sandi.stafford@gmail.com. Pastor: Russell Hinson.
- North Shreve Baptist Church, Shreveport: **Trevor Thomas live!**, December 18, 11 a.m. A love offering will be taken. Pastor: Cecil Marr.
- Social Springs Baptist Church, Ringgold: **Mark Lanier will present a Christmas Concert with special guest Andrew Ishe, pianist for the group Shenandoah**, December 18, 6 p.m. Pastor: James Hester.

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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.

GKU ZJI HJTYUWIK RP ZJI HGLZTDTZS QILZ ZJI

LGMMRDIW XLRK ZJI PRXWZIIKZJ UGS RP ZJI PTWMZ

BRKZJ.

IFWG MTE: KTKIZIIK

Clues:
J = H; G = A

Answer to October 27 Scripture Crypto:
Judges sixteen: seven



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SENIOR ADULT LUNCHEON



FIRST WEST | WEST MONROE | 11:45AM

January 24, 2023

Followed by an afternoon of worship with:



Michael W.
SMITH

World-acclaimed
Christian Artist



Tim
DOWDY

Executive Director of
Evangelism & Leadership
North American
Mission Board

Plus, an afternoon of Breakouts offering
evangelistic-based sessions for all ages!

To Register: LouisianaBaptists.org/SAL

For additional information, contact:

Jeff Ingram, Adult Ministry & Church Administration Strategist at 318.448.3402