

# Baptist Briefs: Baptist World Congress online registration opens

July 4, 2014

Baptist World Congress online registration opens. Registration for the Baptist World Congress in Durban, South Africa, July 22-26, 2015, is [open online](#). For individuals from the United States, a discounted early-bird registration \$200 fee is in effect until Nov. 30. The fee increases to \$250 after the early deadline. Online registration closes July 10, 2015.

**Louisiana pastor leads National Baptist group.** Samuel Tolbert, pastor of the Greater St. Mary Missionary Baptist Church of Lake Charles, La., was elected the 15th president of the [National Baptist Convention of America, Inc., International](#), at the group's June 23-27 annual meeting in



Memphis, Tenn. Samuel Tolbert Tolbert defeated incumbent president Stephen Thurston of Chicago and George Brooks of Nashville, Tenn., in a three-way race. Tolbert, 55, is former general secretary of the National Baptist Convention of America, Inc., and since 2005 has led as president the Louisiana Home and Foreign Missions State Convention. He is a graduate of Bishop College in Dallas with a master of divinity degree from Payne Theological Seminary in Wilberforce, Ohio, and is pursuing a D.Min. at the Stephen Olford Center at Union University in Memphis, Tenn. According to the National Council of Churches' 2012 Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches, the National Baptist Convention of America, Inc.,

International, is the eighth-largest religious body in the United States, with 3.5 million members. Among Baptist bodies, only the 5.1 million-member National Baptist Convention USA, Inc., and 16 million-member Southern Baptist Convention are bigger.

**Truett student receives pastoral ministry award.** Erica Whitaker, a third-year student at Baylor University's [Truett Theological Seminary](#), received the Addie Davis Award for excellence in pastoral ministry from Baptist Women in Ministry. Whitaker has served as interim minister of outreach at Agape Baptist Church in Fort Worth and will begin a two-year pastoral residence at Wilshire Baptist Church in Dallas in August.