

Baptist Briefs: Liberian Baptists increase efforts in Ebola battle

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Baptists in Liberia are ramping up their response to the deadly Ebola virus outbreak that has killed more than 2,100 people in five West African countries. The [Liberia Baptist Missionary and Educational Convention](#) is expanding efforts to distribute food and sanitary supplies in hard-hit regions along the country's northwest coast and to conduct educational campaigns nationally, convention leaders said.  Liberian Baptist workers pray for their country, reeling from the deadly Ebola outbreak. (LBMEC photo)The 300-church convention also is urging Liberians to change behaviors that encourage the spread of Ebola and to cooperate fully with government measures "including the intentional quarantining of specific communities, the restriction in the migration of people, reporting of suspected cases and the accessibility of health and burial teams in suspected communities." Baptist organizations in the United States channeling funds to Liberia include the American Baptist Churches USA, the Baptist General Association of Virginia, Baptist World Alliance and the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. The Lott Carey Foreign Mission Convention is collecting supplies for its Lott Carey Mission School, a K-12 institution in Monrovia, to distribute. The Southern Baptist Convention's International Mission Board has personnel in Liberia, as well as nearby Guinea, but last month IMB officials said personnel had no plans to leave the countries.

Accrediting agency gives reasons for Louisiana College probation. A "prevalent culture" of "misstating, ignoring or denying matters of documentable fact" was among concerns prompting an accrediting agency to place a Southern Baptist college in Louisiana on probation, according to

a July 9 letter recently made public. On top of the list of concerns about integrity at [Louisiana College](#), the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges found evidence of undue external influence from leadership of the Louisiana Baptist Convention. The convention owns the college and elects its trustees, but accrediting standards require that governing boards of colleges act independently of external individuals or organizations—including religious bodies—to protect the institution’s academic welfare. Other questions in the letter focused on alleged failure to protect “whistleblowers” in personnel evaluations, forged signatures on documents submitted to the accrediting agency and financial controls. The letter to Interim President Argile Smith warned Louisiana College bears the “burden of proof” in demonstrating why its accreditation should not be revoked. By rule, schools on probation must regain compliance of accreditation standards within two years. Just six months before the letter, Louisiana College’s accreditation was reaffirmed after two years on warning status—a sanction less severe than probation.

National Baptists elect new president. A Mississippi pastor defeated four other candidates to win election as president of the [National Baptist Convention USA, Inc.](#)—the nation’s largest historically African-American denomination and second-largest Baptist group behind Southern Baptists. Delegates to the 7.5 million-member convention’s 134th annual session chose Jerry Young, a sitting vice president and immediate past president of the General Missionary Baptist State Convention of Mississippi, over pastors R.B. Holmes of Jacksonville, Fla.; Clifford Jones of Charlotte, N.C.; Boise Kimber of New Haven, Conn.; and Randy Vaughn of Port Arthur. Young, pastor of New Hope Baptist Church in Jackson, Miss., since 1980, earned both this master of divinity and doctor of ministry degrees from Reformed Theological Seminary.