

# Baptist Briefs: Louisiana College elects president

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[Louisiana College](#) has chosen an official from a Baptist school in South Carolina as president. Trustees of the Louisiana Baptist Convention-related college unanimously elected Rick Brewer, vice president of student affairs and athletics at Charleston Southern University in Charleston, S.C., as Louisiana College's 11th president. Brewer, an ordained Baptist minister in his 28th year of service to South Carolina Baptist Convention-affiliated Charleston Southern, takes office in Pineville, La., April 7. He succeeds Joe Aguiard, who [resigned last year](#) amid controversy and was named the school's chancellor. Argile Smith, associate dean of the college's Caskey School of Divinity, filled in as interim president. Part of Brewer's resume includes service as an evaluator for the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Last June, the SACS Commission on Colleges put Louisiana College on probation over leadership issues, including external influence by the Louisiana Baptist Convention, which chooses the college's board of trustees and provides \$3.2 million in annual funding.

**Rwandan Baptist honored with human rights award.** Corneille Gato Munyamasoko, general secretary of the Association of Baptist Churches in Rwanda, is the recipient of the 2015 [Baptist World Alliance](#) Congress Quinquennial Human Rights Award. The award will be presented in July in Durban, South Africa, at the 21st Baptist World Congress.



Corneille Gato Munyamasoko has dedicated his life to peace and reconciliation and fighting the stigma associated with HIV and AIDS. He was born in exile in what was then Zaire, now the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to refugee parents who fled Rwanda in 1959 when outbreaks of ethnic violence shook regions of the country. Munyamasoko moved to Rwanda after the 1994 genocide to participate in the country's reconstruction and foster reconciliation. Munyamasoko and his wife, Anne-Marie, opened their home to accept genocide orphans as their own children. As an educator, he launched peace and reconciliation clubs in each of the secondary schools under his jurisdiction and appointed school chaplains. He also developed regional initiatives that helped Hutu and Tutsi participants understand the causes of the genocide, seek and extend forgiveness, and build relationships based on the principles of justice, mercy and faith.

**American Baptist College criticized for inviting lesbian preacher.**

Baptist groups squared off to criticize or support a historically African-American college in Nashville, Tenn., for inviting a lesbian minister who is married to another woman to speak on campus. The National Baptist Fellowship of Concerned Pastors, identified as "an informal fellowship of pastors with an affinity to the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc." issued a press release objecting to Yvette Flunder, founder of the San Francisco-based City of Refuge United Church of Christ, being invited to speak at [American Baptist College](#) during the 58th Garnett-Nabrit Lecture Series. The group called on American Baptist College President Forrest Harris to rescind the invitation and for Jerry Young, the new president of

the National Baptist Convention, to release a statement clarifying his views on the subject. Two Texans—Dwight McKissic, pastor of [Cornerstone Baptist Church in Arlington](#), and Randy Vaughn, pastor of Mount Sinai Missionary Baptist Church in Port Arthur—are co-coordinators of the Fellowship of Concerned Pastors. In response, Baptist leaders from congregations and national groups including the Alliance of Baptists, Association of Welcoming and Affirming Baptists, Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America and American Baptist Home Mission Societies issued a statement of support for the president and board of trustees at American Baptist College.

**Liberian seminary re-opens after Ebola crisis.** The Liberia Baptist Theological Seminary reopened after six months of closure prompted by the Ebola crisis in West Africa. Richard Wilson, a Mercer University professor named in 2013 as president of the seminary associated with the Liberia Baptist Missionary and Educational Convention, made an unplanned return to the United States after Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf closed the nation's schools in a state of emergency declared Aug. 6. Sirleaf lifted the state of emergency in November, citing successes in keeping the spread of the virus at bay. Before closing the campus, seminary administrators announced the launch of Care for One Hundred, a project to provide basic needs for about 100 people living on campus suddenly out of work and largely isolated due to travel restrictions during the Ebola scare. The effort raised nearly \$60,000, Wilson said, providing one basic meal a day for more than 1,000 people a month in four counties and seven compounds, including two orphanages. Wilson hopes to continue the program for at least six more months, while shifting his fund-raising efforts toward getting back to his original task of rebuilding infrastructure at the seminary opened in 1976 under auspices of the Southern Baptist Convention.