

The Gatekeeper *congratulates our*

NEW ORLEANS SAINTS



SUPER BOWL CHAMPIONS

The Gatekeeper

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A guy with a helmet – and a message

BY PAUL F. SOUTH

WHITE CASTLE, La.—As Super Bowl week dawned in New Orleans, Greg Wilton's face graced the front page of the city's newspaper, *The Times-Picayune*.

But Wilton, 27, tried to quell the buzz from family and friends over his Page One presence, featuring the bi-vocational pastor clutching a replica New Orleans Saints headgear.

"I'm just a guy with a helmet," he said.

But there's more to the story. This is no ordinary football helmet. And Wilton, pastor of the First Baptist Church of White Castle, La., a town of 1,946, where bayous and sugarcane stalks likely outnumber people, is more than "a guy with a helmet."



He's a guy with a message to share.

First, about the helmet: Rewind to the spring of 2006, seven months after Hurricane Katrina. Wilton, then a new graduate student at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, joined a group of college spring breakers to gut houses in New Orleans' devastated Upper Ninth Ward, one of the Crescent City's hardest-hit areas. Up to eight feet of floodwater drowned the neighborhood.

As they plodded through the muck and mire, a bulldozer chewed through debris left in Katrina's wake. From the jaws of the dozer popped a replica New Orleans Saints helmet. It bounced on the pavement.

For Wilton, who had grown up in New Orleans and was a Saints fan before his family moved to South Carolina, the headgear was a treasure plucked from the mire.

"I couldn't believe they would throw away a Saints helmet, one damaged by Katrina," Wilton said. "I asked our supervisor if I could keep it."

The boss agreed. It's been in a styrofoam cooler in the back of Wilton's car ever since.

The old gold gridiron hard hat is no ordinary souvenir. Through a residue of muck and mud, the autographs of former Saint players Deuce McAllister, Aaron Brooks and Michael Lewis, as well as others, are still visible. But there is a more powerful signature, left behind by the most devastating hurricane in American history.

The waterline of Katrina's floodwaters has etched a permanent signature on the helmet, visible through the grime just below the tip of the team's own signature, the fleur-de-lis, a mark that tells a storm story all its own.

"From the helmet, you can actually gather that the helmet floated in the water, muck and mire and had developed its own waterline, actually visible on the helmet. That's the thing that makes it very valuable, at least to me," Wilton said. "It is a visible reminder, especially of the floodwaters of Hurricane Katrina."

On more than a few houses, the indelible mark of the flood is still visible, nearly five years after the Aug. 29, 2005 storm. But such a mark isn't so common on things like football helmets.

"It's full of dirt and a little bit of grime still," Wilton said. "I have not done a thing to it. The dirt

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NOBTS
Chapel

New Orleans Campus
Chapel Schedule

Chapel Services are held
at 11 a.m in Leavell Chapel

Tuesday, February 9
Colonel Mike Durham, Chaplain
U.S. Military Academy
West Point, NY

Thursday, February 11
Dr. David Uth, Senior Pastor
First Baptist Church
Orlando, FL

Tuesday, February 16
No chapel
Happy Mardi Gras!

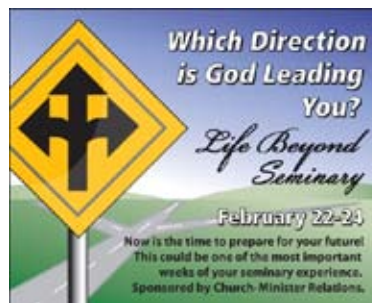
Thursday, February 18
Dr. Allan Taylor
Minister of Education
FBC Woodstock
Woodstock, GA

Baptist Association
of Christian Educators
Annual Conference

New Orleans Baptist
Theological Seminary
February 18-19, 2010
Student Rate: \$5
www.baptisteducators.org

Life Beyond Seminary Conference

The Life Beyond Seminary Conference will be held Feb 22-24 in Hardin Student Center. LBS is an event where students can meet with local state conventions about ministry opportunities. On February 22 between 5:30 and 7:30pm free food will be provided in the Atrium.



Greer-Heard
Point-Counterpoint Forum

FEB. 26-27, 2010

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The Message of
Jesus

What did he really teach?



GK
online

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Extension Center News

Scholarship Highlights

Scholarship Name/Originator: Hall Missions Scholarship Award

Who is eligible? Available to undergraduate and graduate students: Applicants must be planning a career in missions, and demonstrate financial need.

Scholarship Amount: One time award of \$1000

Application Procedure: Deadline is April 21st. Information and application can be found in the Financial Aid Office or by emailing financialaid@nobts.edu

1098-T Tax Statement for 2009

Students may now be requesting their 1098-T Tuition Tax Statement for 2009. The statements will be made available starting January 31, 2010. Requests can be made via e-mail to boclerk@nobts.edu or by filling out a 1098-T Request Form, available at the Business Office window. Your request should include your full name, your NOBTS ID#, and the address where the form should be mailed (unless indicated for pick-up at the Business Office). For more information, contact Donna Parker at 504.282.4455 ext 3277 or boclerk@nobts.edu.

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H1N1 Vaccine

The H1N1 vaccine is available at the Walgreens on Gentilly Boulevard Monday-Friday from 2-4pm. The cost is \$18.

Manuscript copyediting/proofreading for degree candidates and authors. Metro NOLA. Reasonable. K. L. Burns Editorial Services (985) 725-9380.

Free copies of SBC Life, the Oklahoma Baptist Messenger, the Louisiana Baptist Message and the IMB missions magazine CommissionStories are available in the PR office.

NOBTS Women

Student Wives

A Progressive Valentines Dinner For Student Wives, Profettes, and Their Spouses Thursday, February 18 – 6:00 pm (The meal begins at the President's Home.) Tickets are \$10.00 per couple and are on sale in the Dean of Students Office (Mon.-Fri. 8-5). Tickets will be on sale up until Monday, February 15.

Childcare during this event will be provided through the NOBTS preschool for children up to 8 years. To make childcare reservations contact the preschool at 504-816-8585. Reservations must be made by Monday, February 15.

For All NOBTS Women Monday Brown Bag Bible Study

For all NOBTS women: every Monday starting Monday, January 25 from 12:00-1:00 pm in the Balcony Room (in the Cafeteria). Bring your lunch and join us. We will do the study during the lunch hour and there is no homework!

QUEST (Fellowship of Women Students) Movie Night

All women students are invited to attend- Thursday, February 25, 7:00 pm in Carey Hall Parlor. Bring a snack (salty or sweet) to share. Drinks will be provided

BCM Weekly Worship Service

Join BCM for The Well on Tuesday nights for dinner and worship. Dinner begins at 5:15 followed by worship and Bible study at 6:15 in the Baptist association building located at 2222 Lakefront Drive. This will be a time to worship with other believers from across the city and a great way to meet new people from UNO and William Carey School of Nursing. For more information join the facebook group "BCM Living Room at NOBTS" or email Beth Masters at dottimasters@aol.com

NOBTS You Tube Homepage



The Gatekeeper

Gatekeeper Submissions

The Gatekeeper is published weekly during the school year and twice in the summer.

Items for The Gatekeeper are due Wednesday at Noon to appear the following issue.

Submissions to The Gatekeeper appear as space allows and are subject to editing.

Email your Gatekeeper submissions to gmyers@nobts.edu.



Angelfood Ministries in New Orleans

[Download February Menu](#)

Order at: www.angelfoodneworleans.com or Celebration Church 2701 Transcontinental Dr. Metairie, LA Mon.,

Cash, Food Stamp Card, Debit or Credit Cards - No checks

Distribution Day: 10am-12noon Saturday, Feb. 27 at 2001 Airline Dr. Metairie, LA

Job of the Week

Company Name- Chick-Fil-A

Job Description- Various Jobs – Grand Opening March 11

Contact Person- Apply in Person from 11am-2pm or 4-6pm Monday-Friday

Address- 3870 Veterans Memorial Blvd.

Hours/Info- Full Time and Part Time Positions Available

Date posted- 2/1/10



Click Here for Bible Reading & Scripture Memory Plan

from HELMET, on page 1

and grime are where the value is. Yes, it was a Saints helmet covered with signatures (of Saints players). But this helmet has the signature of Hurricane Katrina."

And then there is the message: For Wilton, who grew up in New Orleans, as well as his brother Rob, the call of God was clearly to stay in New Orleans, and Southern Louisiana.

"Always, I've had a passion and desire to be a part of something that is much bigger than myself," Wilton said. "And there is nothing greater than the Gospel and the proclamation of salvation through Jesus Christ to as many people as possible. This is a thirst that I've had."

"By God's grace, that thirst led me to New Orleans, as it did my brother. It gave me the opportunity to be reunited with my hometown, and it also gave me the opportunity to advance the Gospel," Wilton said.

In the days, weeks and months immediately after Katrina, flocks of volunteers swarmed the Crescent City to offer physical relief and meet physical needs. Wilton felt a different call.

"What pressed on my mind, and my brother's mind, and the minds of so many others was that we needed as many or more people addressing the spiritual needs of New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina. That's what led me back . . . You go where God leads. I was grateful that God opened up a door through Katrina."

For Greg Wilton and his wife Abby, the ministry road has carried them from work with Mission Lab, to the heart of New Orleans French Quarter at Vieux Carre Baptist Church, to Vintage Church in Uptown New Orleans, and now to White Castle, a town with one red light.

"I just rejoice in God doing all this. He's bringing triumph in tragedy."

And, he finds joy in serving in a small church, where some 40 to 50 gather to worship in Sunday.

"I've talked about how Katrina left a big mark on the city of New Orleans. But whenever Jesus truly intervenes in a person's life, He leaves a lasting impression that forever changes people." – Greg Wilton

"The foundation of the Southern Baptist Convention is the small church," Wilton said. "If we can just be a little part of God's overall agenda, we're just happy and grateful to be serving."

The water-lined, weather-beaten helmet is a symbol of the struggles of a team, and a region. For while White Castle avoided Katrina, it suffered in the wake of 2008's Hurricane Gustav.

"The helmet has been something our region can connect with," he said. "It's a great representation of the unique bond that the Saints have with the city of New Orleans and the Gulf region. It illustrates the struggle that we have gone through together. For a franchise to have struggled for 43 years, and for a region to have gone through hurricanes like Katrina, Rita and Gustav, there is a unique connection."

But the helmet also brings a connection to the transformative message of Christ. Like the memories of Katrina, the gunk and grime left on the helmet will take hard work to remove, and for the treasured headgear to be restore.

"Often I share with people that Hurricane Katrina has left a lasting residue on the city of New Orleans that will not go away easily. But for us, Jesus has done the hard work of removing the residue of sin that is in our lives. He's done the hard work on the cross to remove the residue of sin that prevents us from having a right relationship with Him."

The helmet has also been used on other avenues of ministry. Wilton is a substitute teacher at White Castle High School, and serves as the chaplain for the Bulldog football team.

"I've talked about how Katrina left a big mark on the city of New Orleans. But whenever Jesus truly intervenes in a person's life, He leaves a lasting impression that forever changes people."

Gratitude courses through the story of the guy with the helmet.

"Our church is just grateful to preach Jesus through any means necessary," Wilton said. "If that's using our culture to relay the message of Jesus who hits us in all levels in all ways, so be it. We're just real grateful that God has spoken to us in this way."

The past four years since the young pastor returned home to New Orleans have left their own impact.

"The impact of ministry post-Katrina down here has reminded me to always put my faith into action. It's reminded me that my heart, my mouth, my hands and my feet need to be united for God's purposes in the Gospel.

While the eyes of White Castle, New Orleans, Louisiana and the world will be fixed on Super Bowl XLIV, Wilton, a lifelong Saints fan, tried to bring some perspective Friday on his Twitter and Facebook pages. He wanted to make sure that his own fan frenzy doesn't become idolatry.

He wrote: *"Who Dat. But may the NOLA Saints be cursed if we the called Saints don't exalt He who made us saints. We have a greater goal than the Super Bowl."*

"In all this euphoria that our region has experienced, I consider it all a loss, including a Super Bowl victory, compared to people knowing Jesus Christ, in whom there's life eternal," Wilton said.

So, win or lose on Sunday, Greg Wilton, his wife Abby (who's expecting their first child this summer), will minister with the helmet in tow, as they search for the treasure's true owner.

"I'm not just a guy with a helmet. I'm a guy with an illustration of the greatest message of all."

Jim Tatum's
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