

tithing_60203

May 31, 2003

Posted: 5/30/03

Percentage of tithing households drops

VENTURA, Calif. (RNS)-The portion of American households that tithe, or give one-tenth of their income, to their church dropped from 8 percent in 2001 to 3 percent in 2002, according to the Barna Research Group.

The Ventura, Calif.-based marketing research firm found that groups with the highest proportion of tithers were people ages 55 or older, college graduates, Republicans, Southerners, conservatives, middle-income individuals, evangelicals, and those who attend mainline Protestant churches.

Those least likely to tithe included Hispanics, liberals, Catholics, parents who home-school their children, Midwesterners, those not registered to vote or registered as independents, and households earning less than \$20,000 and without a head of household who graduated from college.

together_60203

May 31, 2003

Posted: 5/30/03

TOGETHER:

Texas needs more new churches

With 5,716 churches and missions related to the Baptist General Convention of Texas, there is one Texas Baptist congregation for every 3,761 people in our state. In five years, a projected 1.7 million people will be added to our current population of 21.8 million Texans-10.5 million of whom are not a part of any faith community.

If we are to continue serving Texas as we have, we must start at least 1,100 congregations in the next five years. We are off to a good start. The BGCT Church Starting Center's Genesis Project goal is for Texas Baptists to start 777 churches in three years, and we helped to start 264 this past year.

CHARLES WADE Executive Director BGCT Executive Board
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We estimate we will lose about 600 churches and missions over the next five years due to disbandment and mergers. Over the past five years, 718 churches have uniquely aligned with the other state convention, and 254 have entered into a dual alignment with them while remaining connected to the BGCT as well. Last year, our loss of churches to the other convention was less than 17 percent of the previous year, and we added 3.5 churches for every one that joined the other convention.

twins_60203

May 31, 2003

Posted: 5/30/03

Born together, baptized together, 82-year-old blind twins open eyes

By George Henson

Staff Writer

DALLAS-They were together at birth, and yet again at the baptism ceremony symbolizing their rebirth 82 years later.

under_god_60203

May 31, 2003

Posted: 5/30/03

Bush administration asks court to

allow 'under God'

WASHINGTON (RNS)—The Bush administration has formally asked the U.S. Supreme Court to overrule a lower court decision and allow the Pledge of Allegiance to include the words “one nation under God.”

U.S. Solicitor General Theodore Olson said last summer's ruling by the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals that said the pledge violates the separation of church and state is “manifestly contrary” to previous church-state cases.

“Whatever else the (First Amendment) may prohibit, this court's precedents make it clear that it does not forbid the government from officially acknowledging the religious heritage, foundation and character of this nation,” Olson wrote in his argument.

wayland_team_60203

May 31, 2003

Posted: 5/30/03

Wayland sends out revival team

By Jonathan Petty

Wayland Baptist University

PLAINVIEW—Wayland Baptist University will extend the reach of its student summer missions teams this year with a new Lighting the Way revival team.

wayland_center_60203

May 31, 2003

Posted: 5/30/03

The first phase of Wayland's Laney Center will include a gym, track, weight training and aerobics areas.

Wayland plans new student recreation center

PLAINVIEW-Wayland Baptist University will break ground by the end of this year on phase one of the Pete and Nelda Laney Student Activities Center.

President Paul Armes announced May 16 that the 51,010-square-foot

facility will be constructed in two phases in order to expedite its use.

The first phase, to be constructed at a cost of \$4.4 million, will include a double gymnasium, indoor track, weight training and aerobics area, classrooms, dressing rooms and a student lounge. The second phase will add an Olympic-size natatorium.

workplace_bill_60203

May 31, 2003

Posted: 5/30/03

Broad coalition supporting workplace freedom bill

By Kevin Eckstrom

Religion News Service

WASHINGTON—An unusually broad coalition of religious groups is pushing a bill that would protect religious expression in the workplace. But civil liberties groups are concerned the bill could be used to advance on-the-job proselytizing.

mclaren_60203

May 31, 2003

Book reimagines evangelism for a post-apologetic world

By Greg Warner

Associated Baptist Press

SPENCERVILLE, Md. (ABP)-What can the mating habits of tortoises teach humans about their spiritual connection to God?

edwards_60203

May 31, 2003

Posted: 5/30/03

Bernice Edwards dies in an Illinois prison

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. (RNS)-The woman whose wild spending and close relationship with a Baptist minister landed them both in prison has died.

Bernice Vernell Edwards was 46. She was serving a nine-month prison sentence in Illinois and suffered from a "chronic pulmonary condition," the

St. Petersburg Times reported. An autopsy was scheduled to determine the exact cause of death.

Edwards was a close associate of Henry Lyons, former president of the National Baptist Convention USA. When Lyons' wife suspected the two of having an affair, she set fire to a waterfront mansion co-owned by Lyons and Edwards. Both denied a romantic affair.

ethics_60203

May 31, 2003

Posted: 5/30/03

HealthSouth executive, accused of fraud, heard sermons on ethics

By Greg Garrison

Religion News Service

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (RNS) -HealthSouth Corp. founder Richard Scrushy, accused by federal investigators of overseeing massive accounting fraud, sat through many Sunday sermons on corporate ethics and the hazards of wealth, his pastor says.

explore_60203

May 31, 2003

Posted: 5/30/03

LifeWay Explore the Bible Series for June 8

Salvation comes through personal faith in Jesus

Galatians 2:4-5, 11-21

By Jim Perkins

Madison Hills Baptist Church, San Antonio

family_60203

May 31, 2003

Posted: 5/30/03

LifeWay Family Bible Series for June 8

Indicators of a growing disciple of

Christ

Luke 9:23-24; Ephesians 4:29-5:10

By Tim Owens

First Baptist Church, Bryan