

National Digest_22304

February 20, 2004

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National Digest

Requests for help rose last year. Requests for emergency food and shelter assistance increased last year in the 25 cities surveyed by the U.S. Conference of Mayors. The 2003 survey found that requests for help with food increased by an average of 17 percent over 2002 and requests for shelter increased by an average of 13 percent. Unemployment and various employment-related problems were cited by the most cities as the leading causes of hunger. Fifty-six percent of the cities surveyed reported that people in need of food were turned away because of a lack of resources. A much larger percentage of participating cities-84 percent-said emergency shelters had to turn away homeless families due to a lack of resources.

Giving from Episcopal dioceses down. The Episcopal Church has seen a 7 percent drop in contributions from local dioceses since it voted last year to approve an openly gay bishop, but officials say it may be premature to link the two developments directly. A Feb. 9 report to the church's Executive Council revealed a drop of about \$2 million in six months, the first tangible measure of the fallout from the controversial decision to approve openly gay Bishop V. Gene Robinson of New Hampshire. The conservative dioceses of Dallas and Pittsburgh have said they will no longer send money to church headquarters. Forty dioceses said they will meet their pledges, and 42 dioceses will send a lower amount. Twenty-four dioceses have yet to finalize their budgets.

Graham announces LA crusade plans. Evangelist Billy Graham has announced plans to hold a summer crusade in the Los Angeles area at the Rose Bowl in Pasadena, Calif. Graham, who was recently released from the hospital after undergoing hip surgery, will lead the Greater Los Angeles Billy Graham Crusade from July 29 to Aug. 1. Graham's crusade in the Los Angeles area in 1949 brought him to national attention. The upcoming event will mark his seventh evangelistic campaign in the region.

On the Move_22304

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On the Move

Jason Bien to First Church in Richmond as minister to students and parents.

- ♦ **E.M. Byford** to Temple Church in Hereford as interim pastor.
 - ♦ **Bill Cathey** to First Church in Sachse as interim pastor.
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Movie's proponents call 'Passion of Christ' stained-glass window for the 21st century_22304

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Movie's proponents call 'Passion of Christ' stained-glass window for the 21st century

By Greg Warner & Trennis Henderson

Associated Baptist Press

NASHVILLE (ABP)-While Mel Gibson's "The Passion of the Christ" will graphically show movie audiences the sacrifice Jesus made on the cross, it's up to Christians to explain why Jesus went through the pain of the cross, Christian leaders say.

BGCT, San Antonio Baptists to pilot volunteer disaster response network_22304

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BGCT, San Antonio Baptists to pilot volunteer disaster response network

SAN ANTONIO—The Baptist General Convention of Texas plans to launch a disaster response network of trained church members who could respond to psychological and spiritual needs in crisis situations.

The convention is hoping to start regional teams of church members trained by the National Organization for Victim Assistance who could serve in widespread and personal crises such as disasters, unexpected deaths and violent crimes.

Teams will work in concert with Texas Baptist Men's disaster relief efforts and victim relief ministries.

LifeWay pulls VBS promotion with questionable endorsement quote_22304

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LifeWay pulls VBS promotion with questionable endorsement quote

By Bob Allen

EthicsDaily.com

LifeWay Christian Resources has withdrawn promotional materials quoting a Texas Baptist leader as endorsing this summer's Asian-themed "Rickshaw Rally" Vacation Bible School curriculum, which some have criticized as racially insensitive.

Former San Marcos Baptist Academy staffer charged with

molesting student_22304

17-year-old

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Former San Marcos Baptist Academy staffer charged with molesting 17-year-old student

By Ferrell Foster

Texas Baptist Communications

SAN MARCOS-A San Marcos Baptist Academy employee has been dismissed and subsequently arrested on charges of molesting a 17-year-old academy student.

San Francisco grants gay couples marriage

licenses_22304

February 20, 2004

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San Francisco grants gay couples marriage licenses

By Robert Marus

ABP Washington Bureau

SAN FRANCISCO (ABP)-As thousands of same-sex couples rushed to get married in San Francisco over the Valentine's Day weekend, opponents tried to block the marriages in court.

Graham backs SBC name change_22304

February 20, 2004

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Jack Graham backs SBC name change

By Tony Cartledge

Biblical Recorder

NASHVILLE (ABP)-Southern Baptist Convention President Jack Graham has called on the SBC to consider changing its name.

Texas Tidbits_22304

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Texas Tidbits

Dodson to lead Breckenridge Village. Charles Dodson has been named executive director of Breckenridge Village in Tyler, a residential facility for adults with mental disabilities. Dodson begins his duties with Breckenridge Village, a ministry of Baptist Child and Family Services, March 15. He has been pastor of The Woods Baptist Church in Tyler seven years, and he previously served churches in Austin and Carthage. He is a graduate of the University of Texas and holds master of divinity and doctor of ministry degrees from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Sue, have two sons, Derek and Brady.

Historical Society explores church/state issues. "Lone Star Visions of Church, State and Society" is the theme of the spring meeting of the Texas Baptist Historical Society in Austin. The meeting, scheduled in conjunction with the Texas State Historical Association, will be 10:30 a.m. March 4 at the Renaissance Hotel, 9721 Arboretum Blvd. Marshall Johnston of Baylor University will examine the influence of theologian Walter Rauschenbusch on J.M. Dawson. Christopher Lee Canipe of Baylor will present a paper on

George W. Truett and religious liberty. Barry Hankins, also from Baylor, will respond to both presentations. For more information, contact Alan Lefever at (972)331-2235 or tbhc@bgct.org.

Howard Payne preview weekend slated. Howard Payne University will host Stinger Daze, a preview weekend for prospective students, Feb. 27-28. The event is designed specifically for high school and transfer students. Guests will tour the campus, visit with faculty and current HPU students, and receive information on financial aid, admissions, academics and student life. Cost is \$20, which includes a T-shirt, a ticket to Spring Sing, a continental breakfast and lunch. For reservations or more information, contact (325) 649-8020, toll-free (800) 880-4478 or e-mail enroll@hputx.edu.

TOGETHER: Be prepared for 'Passion' follow-up_22304

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TOGETHER: Be prepared for 'Passion' follow-up

"I love him more than I ever knew possible. ... I connected to a place I could have never, ever gone. I don't want people to see me. All I want them to see is Jesus Christ."

That's what James Caviezel, the actor who portrayed Jesus in "The Passion of the Christ," recently told a Newsweek reporter.

Churches are buying tickets for this movie, and their members are taking friends to see it.

CHARLES
WADE
Executive
Director
BGCT
Executive
Board

Suburban church clarifies its purpose, learns how to resolve differences_22304

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Suburban church clarifies its purpose, learns how to resolve differences

By John Hall

COPPELL-Valley Ranch Baptist Church seemingly had all the ingredients for expansion in a growing suburb of Dallas. Young families drove church development. The congregation owned its land and facilities. More people were coming. Excitement and energy was high.

Cybercolumn for 2/23 by Berry D. Simpson: Listen to the music_22304

February 20, 2004

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CYBERCOLUMN: Listen to the music

By Berry D. Simpson

One morning, I was camped in a back booth of my favorite local fast-food joint, and wrote in my journal as the overhead music played “Happy Man” by Chicago—a 30-year-old favorite of mine. It was wonderful. I could literally feel my heartbeat change to match the rhythm of the song as I sat and listened and settled in. It was a pleasant sensation.

“Merely by chance/Very unsuspecting/You caught my heart/Unprotecting

me/Now I've fallen in love with you."