

# Religious Right suffers setbacks at polls

November 11, 2005

Posted: 11/11/05

## Religious Right suffers setbacks at polls

**By Robert Marus**

*ABP Washington Bureau*

WASHINGTON (ABP)-With a handful of exceptions, candidates and causes backed by religious conservatives went down to defeat in unusually prominent off-year elections Nov. 8.

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## Sex ed ruling reviled

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## Sex ed ruling reviled

WASHINGTON (ABP)-Conservative groups expressed outrage at a ruling by the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals involving parents' rights and sex

education.

The court dismissed a lawsuit by six parents who had sued the Palmdale, Calif., school district, near Los Angeles. The parents sued the district for submitting their elementary-aged children to a survey that included some questions about sex.

Judge Stephen Reinhardt, writing the ruling for a unanimous three-judge panel, upheld a lower federal court's determination that “there is no fundamental right of parents to be the exclusive provider of information regarding sexual matters to their children” and that “parents have no due process or privacy right to override the determinations of public schools as to the information to which their children will be exposed while enrolled as students.”

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## **South Texas School president elected**

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## **South Texas School president elected**

Trustees of the South Texas School of Christian Studies—formerly the Baptist Learning Center—in Corpus Christi elected Tony Celelli (right) as the institution's new president. Celelli follows Linn Self (left), who has been

president since 1996. Self announced his retirement plans in April. He will serve the school until the end of December. Celelli's official tenure with the school begins Nov. 15. Celelli has served as minister of spiritual formation at Second Baptist Church in Corpus Christi since 1998. He also has led an inner-city ministry called "The Station" since 1999, served as a trustee of the school five years, and taught as an adjunct for Howard Payne University in the South Texas program four years. Celelli is a graduate of Hardin-Simmons University and Logsdon Seminary, and he currently is pursuing a doctorate in leadership studies at Dallas Baptist University.

News of religion, faith, missions, Bible study and Christian ministry among Texas Baptist churches, in the BGCT, the Southern Baptist Convention ( SBC ) and around the world.

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# **San Antonio church seeks to transform its community**

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Annie and  
Cecil  
Suarez  
(left) work  
with  
Esperanza  
and  
Eusebio  
Reyna on  
the  
evangelism  
team at  
South San  
Filadelfia  
Baptist  
Church's  
food  
pantry.  
(Photos by  
Ken Camp)

## **San Antonio church seeks to transform its community**

**By Ken Camp**

*Managing Editor*

SAN ANTONIO—South San Filadelfia Baptist Church members understand the importance of meeting human needs in the low-income area surrounding their congregation, but they want to do more. They want to

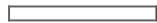
transform their community and impact its future.

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# Texas Tidbits

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## Texas Tidbits

**UMHB alum killed after homecoming.** Bill and Becky Zerbe were killed in a car accident on their way back to Albuquerque, N.M., following homecoming activities at the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor. She graduated from UMHB in 1975. The accident occurred about 4:40 p.m. Nov. 5 outside Mexia. Both died at the scene, and her parents—William and Norma Bueie of Mexia—who were in the back seat were taken to Hillcrest Baptist Medical Center, where they were listed in critical condition. "We are deeply saddened by the news of this accident," said UMHB President Jerry Bawcom. "Our hearts and prayers go out to the Zerbe family and friends."

**SBTC elects Swofford president.** Messengers to the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention annual meeting approved a \$19.3 million budget for 2006 and elected as president Steve Swofford, pastor of First Baptist Church in Rockwall. The meeting in Amarillo drew 910 registered messengers and guests. Messengers approved resolutions affirming traditional marriage, the sanctity of human life and the teaching of intelligent design in public

schools. The Southern Baptists of Texas Convention broke away from the Baptist General Convention of Texas in 1998.

**Baylor awarded energy research grant.** The United States Department of Energy awarded Baylor University's physics department a three-year, \$360,000 grant for a project dedicated to research in high-energy physics.

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## **TOGETHER: Constitution, bylaws reflect hard work**

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## **TOGETHER: Constitution, bylaws reflect hard work**

Occasionally, someone asks, "What is it about Texas Baptists that makes you so eager to tackle big challenges?" Texas Baptists believe they can do anything God wants them to do. They love their churches, and they love being part of a cooperative effort that allows them to make a difference in Texas and touch the world.

This week, we gather in Austin for our annual meeting. I wish all who read this could be present for the fellowship, inspiration and information. As President Albert Reyes leads us, remember to pray for him, and don't forget to thank God for raising Albert up to be such a remarkable leader.

The Baptist University of the Americas, where he serves as president, has seen amazing achievements since he arrived. He has given himself to building the strongest multicultural ministry training center anywhere in the Americas. He has focused us on the changing needs of Texas and how our Hispanic brothers and sisters constitute one of our greatest resources to advance the gospel throughout the world.



Executive Director  
BGCT Executive  
Board

Michael Bell and Stacy Connor are serving as BGCT vice presidents, and these two pastors have brought wonderful dedication and experience to their roles. They have helped make the governance process work effectively, even though we were building a new airplane while we were flying it.

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## **Baylor interim may be Mercer**

# president

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## Baylor interim may be Mercer president

**By Greg Warner & John Pierce**

*Associated Baptist Press & Baptists Today*

MACON, Ga. (ABP)-Mercer University trustees appear poised to elect Baylor University Interim President Bill Underwood as the Georgia Baptist school's president.

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## Faith motivates volunteers engaged in community service

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## Faith motivates volunteers

# engaged in community service

**By Ken Camp**

*Managing Editor*

WACO—Christians who work in soup kitchens, homeless shelters and other community ministries want meaningful relationships with the people they serve. But their relationship with God motivates them more than any expectation of changing other people, a recent study revealed.

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# Disinterested students discover Christ in university classes

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# Disinterested students discover Christ in university classes

**By Teresa Young**

*Wayland Baptist University*

AIEA, Hawaii—Rob Lockridge understands spiritual transformation. In his six years of serving as adjunct instructor in religion at Wayland Baptist University's campus in Hawaii, Lockridge has seen plenty of students go

from a total disinterest and disdain for the Bible to accepting Jesus as their Savior.

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# **Doubting seeker finds faith at Wayland Baptist University**

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## **Doubting seeker finds faith at Wayland Baptist University**

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*Wayland Baptist University*

CLOVIS, N.M.-Raymond Atchley admits he was unsure of his faith when he enrolled at Wayland Baptist University's campus in Clovis, N.M., a few years ago.

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# Cyber Column by John Duncan: Life of a pastor

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## CYBER COLUMN: Life of a pastor

**By John Duncan**

I'm sitting here under the old oak tree, musing with laughter over the life of a pastor. The poet Langston Hughes has a line in one of his poems about the "circus of civilization." I, from time to time, refer to myself as the ringmaster of the circus. As a pastor, I find myself in situations that God must deem painful, laughable or, at the least, enjoyable.

John Duncan
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My mind drifts to the past—one July day years ago, when a teenager fell through the roof of a boat dock and splashed in the water, and his body lodged beneath a rock, and he drowned. The sadness of his mother holding him in the ambulance still haunts my memory. The blood and the grief and the collision of "shoulda, coulda, woulda," or at worst, "if only I had ... ." In grief, people think of everything that might have changed the situation that led to death. The horror of the boy's death, the wailing of the mother, and the flashing red light of the ambulance still reverberate in my mind.

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# Tennessee university to elect own trustees

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## Tennessee university to elect own trustees

**By Lonnie Wilkey**

*Baptist and Reflector*

BRENTWOOD, Tenn. (ABP)—Belmont University has decided not to remain affiliated with the Tennessee Baptist Convention, which helped found the school in 1952.