

Texas Baptist Forum

March 3, 2006

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Baptismal confession

I asked Jesus to be my Savior and Lord when I was 4 years old. The reason wasn't only because I didn't want to go to hell, but also knowing that I would be living my life without God really bothered me.

At the time, I knew I should be baptized, because God commands it and it's also a way for me to show the people around me that I have become a Christian. I didn't want to be baptized because I was afraid of how deep the water was. I wasn't afraid of water, just of being held under too long.

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Letters are welcomed. Send them to marvknox@baptiststandard.com; 250 words maximum.



"For people everywhere, the United States is a partner for a better life. Short-changing these efforts would increase the suffering and chaos of our world, undercut our long-term security and dull the conscience of our country. I urge members of Congress to serve the interests of America by showing the compassion of America."

George W. Bush

In his State of the Union address, urging congressional support for foreign aid

"As long as I serve on the Supreme Court, I will keep in mind the trust that has been placed in me."

Samuel Alito

U.S. Supreme Court justice, in a letter to author/activist James Dobson, read by Dobson on his radio program (New York Times)

"I figure that if Jesus could die so that all of my wrongs could be forgiven, I can certainly extend that same grace to you."

Mandisa Hundley

American Idol contestant and worship leader at Christian women's conferences, responding to judge Simon Cowell after he criticized her weight (RNS/BP)

Cybercolumn by John Duncan: Grace reigns

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CYBER COLUMN: Grace reigns

By John Duncan

I'm sitting here under the old oak tree, remembering Don Knotts in his passing at 81 years of age and Mayberry RFD. I must tell you that I did not spend much of my childhood watching programs like the *Andy Griffith Show* and the nostalgic town Mayberry. Later in life, I learned to watch cable TV's Nick at Night and see Don Knotts in his quirky role as Deputy Sheriff Barney Fife. Laughter reigned.

John Duncan

I find myself reflecting that we live in the dream of a Mayberry world that in actuality is an iPod world. I live in Granbury, Texas, a place where people once referred to our town very much like Mayberry. After all, we had a Dairy Queen, a drive-in-theater, a local radio station that aired high school sporting events, old roads where once in a while a tractor slowed traffic, and a lake where fishermen could fish on the grassy banks on a

warm day. Mayberry reigned.

iPod has arrived now in the 21st century. Dairy Queen has been replaced by Chili's. The drive-in theater is still open, but a newer theater with stadium seating airs the latest flicks. The local radio station has surrendered to the satellite radio in cars and on computers. Traffic is now slowed by sprawling roads and busy intersections and drive time takes longer than it used to, no matter the destination in our town. Fishing has even changed—high-powered boats and sophisticated technology that measures the depths of the lake and even tells you if fish school nearby. Just the other day, I saw young man jogging on the street with headphones in his ears and his iPod blasting the musical tunes of who knows, Lifehouse? Carrie Underwood singing Jesus Take the Wheel? Or maybe Coldplay? Or just maybe, Casting Crowns belting out Lifesong. iPod reigns.

RIGHT OR WRONG? What to do with worn out Bibles

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RIGHT OR WRONG? What to do with worn out Bibles

We have several old Bibles that probably need to be destroyed. We want to be respectful of God's word. What should we do?

This is a great question, particularly for Christians who have a high view of the sacredness of Scripture. Without being too facetious, it also is a great question, because it is nice to be reminded that there are worn-out Bibles.

Number of NAMB missionaries dropped

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Number of NAMB missionaries dropped

ATLANTA (ABP)—The number of career missionaries funded by the North American Mission Board has dropped 10 percent since 1997, the Georgia Baptist state newspaper reported, despite promises the restructured Southern Baptist agency would expand mission work in America.

The decrease is among a number of efforts by NAMB that have failed to meet expectations since the Southern Baptist agency was formed in 1997, according to a news analysis by the Christian Index newspaper. Both NAMB and the Index are based in the Atlanta area.

Bob Reccord directed the massive Southern Baptist Convention restructuring effort in the mid-1990s and later was tapped to lead NAMB, the centerpiece of the new denominational structure. But the mission board has not lived up to its promises, the Index reported, and Reccord's

leadership has raised concerns among Georgia pastors and former employees.

Other NAMB shortcomings cited by the Georgia Baptist paper included:

Logsdon Seminary receives full ATS accreditation

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Logsdon Seminary receives full ATS accreditation

By David Coffield

Hardin-Simmons University

ABILENE—Logsdon Seminary has been accredited by the primary accrediting agency for theological schools in North America.

The seminary, part of Hardin-Simmons University's Logsdon School of Theology, received full accreditation from the Association of Theological Schools.

BGCT names ministry, resource leaders

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BGCT names ministry, resource leaders

By John Hall

Texas Baptist Communications

DALLAS—The Baptist General Convention of Texas has named two leaders of its ministry, evangelism and missions team and filled two positions on its congregational leadership team.

Phil Miller, former associate director of the BGCT Bible Study/Discipleship Center, will now lead the convention's ministry staff within the ministry, evangelism and missions team.

Follow Jesus; preach justice, author urges

March 3, 2006

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Follow Jesus; preach justice, author urges

By Ken Camp

Managing Editor

WACO—God calls Christian ministers to follow Jesus' example and preach social justice, author Tony Campolo said.

"Jesus came preaching the kingdom of God—transformed people living in a transformed social order," Campolo told a ministerial ethics conference at Baylor University's Truett Seminary, sponsored by the Christians Ethics Today Foundation.

Tony Campolo

Ethical preaching begins with clear calling

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Ethical preaching begins with clear calling

By Ken Camp

Managing Editor

WACO—Ethical preaching begins with a minister's clear sense of vocational calling, preaching professor Joel Gregory told a ministerial ethics conference at Baylor University's Truett Seminary.

"The call is both vertical and horizontal. It comes from God, but it needs to be validated by other people," Gregory said.

Victims urge BGCT to release list

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Victims urge BGCT to release list

By John Hall

Texas Baptist Communications

DALLAS—A support group for abuse victims has asked the Baptist General Convention of Texas to publish its list of ministers involved in clergy sexual misconduct.

Miguel Prats, Texas coordinator for the Survivors Network of Those Abused by Priests and Other Clergy, said the convention is allowing ministers who have committed child abuse in one congregation to serve in other churches by not publishing its list of clergy members involved in sexual misconduct.

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Abuse means betrayal, panelists say

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Abuse means betrayal, panelists say

By Ken Camp

Managing Editor

WACO—Sexual misconduct occurs among ministers at a rate higher than among other trusted professions such as doctors and lawyers, a retired seminary ethics professor said.

At its heart, clergy sexual abuse represents betrayal by a minister who abuses the trust of a vulnerable and wounded person, Joe Trull told a ministerial ethics conference at Baylor University's Truett Seminary.

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Imperatives sum up pastoral ethics

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Imperatives sum up pastoral ethics

WACO—A Lubbock minister summed up pastoral ethics in three simple imperatives: “Follow Christ. Keep your integrity. And be nice.”

Pastoral ethics represents a “widely ignored but badly needed emphasis” in Christian life, Philip Wise, pastor of Second Baptist Church in Lubbock, told an ethics in ministry conference at Baylor University’s Truett Seminary.

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Wise suggested pastors establish parameters for ethical behavior by following three principles:

- Follow Christ. Don't focus on problems or follow unworthy examples, Wise urged. Instead, follow Jesus' example. "It's difficult to be unkind and un-Christian when your eyes are on Jesus Christ," he said.
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Be colleagues, not competitors

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Be colleagues, not competitors

By Ken Camp

Managing Editor

WACO—Pastors need to realize that other ministers—whether lay or ordained, inside their congregations or in sister churches—are colleagues, not competitors, said Julie Pennington-Russell, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Waco.

"Relationships are crucial. But if you feel like a failure in that area of your ministry, please know you're not alone," Pennington-Russell told a ministerial ethics conference at Baylor University's Truett Seminary.

Julie Pennington- Russell
