

Chinese Christian leader Wenzao Han dies

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By Robert Marus

ABP Washington Bureau

NANJING, China (ABP) — One of China's most prominent modern-day Christian leaders has died at the age of 83.

Wenzao Han died Feb. 3 in Nanjing. He served from 1996 to 2002 as president of the China Christian Council, and in other capacities with the organization, which is the officially state-sanctioned Protestant denomination in China.

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COMMENTARY: On the death of Han Wenzao (1923-2006)

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COMMENTARY: On the death of Han Wenzao (1923-2006)

By Britt Towery

The news of the death of Dr. Han Wenzao in Nanjing caught my wife and me by surprise. Jody put her hand to her mouth, for it was like losing a member of the family. We paused to pray for his wife Zhuo Zhaohua, who was by his side for six decades.

For my wife and I, Han was as fine a Christian leader as we have ever met. The term "Christian statesman" fit Han Wenzao perfectly. We enjoyed the fellowship of the Hans in their home and work with the China Christian Council which he led for many years.

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In 1953 when Jody and I felt God's leading us to China as missionaries political realities made it impossible. We took the next best assignment, that of Taiwan, the Republic of China, some 100 miles off the East China

coast.

Texas Baptist Forum

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Texas Baptist Forum

Missing a good friend

I have lost a good friend. Phil Strickland died.

Those words haven't completely sunk in yet. He fought cancer for so long, and so courageously, I thought he might finally win the fight. Every day he whipped cancer was one more day God blessed us. Every day he fought was one more day the children of Texas had their most effective voice. Every day Phil got up and went to work, when most of us would stay home, was one more day Texas legislators knew there was a voice of reason in the chaos of the culture wars that have engulfed our state. Every day Phil fought to stay with us was one more day defenders of religious liberty had a passionate ally.

Phil Strickland was a paradox. He was as comfortable on the deer lease as he was at a black-tie affair in North Dallas. Phil was serious and incredibly funny. He was a politician and strategist who was intensely spiritual. He had white skin, but his heart belonged to African-Americans and Hispanics. He was judicious in his speech but never failed to be heard on important issues.

Cybercolumn by Berry Simpson: Landmarks

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CYBER COLUMN: Landmarks

By Berry Simpson

The guys and I were sitting around discussing our current book, Soul Salsa, by Leonard Sweet, and we spent some time on this question: What was the best day of your life, and what was the worst day of your life?

Sweet believes disciples should landmark the moments in their lives. It's important to know when you're having one of life's best moments, or worst. And we should landmark both in our memories. Not to simply be stuck in the past, but as an exercise to remind us that it's the individual moments that make our lives worth living.

Berry D. Simpson

RIGHT OR WRONG? Christians and politics

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RIGHT OR WRONG? Christians and politics

Question: How can I convey to my congregation the necessary, but appropriate, ways to interface and engage as Christians in the political context?

Answer: I've been told that if you want to make friends and influence people, you should never talk about religion or politics. If talking about religion and politics is not a good idea, imagine trying to find appropriate ways to relate the two. However, let me propose my Top 10 Ways for Christians to Engage Political Issues:

10. Remember that Christians are citizens of two kingdoms. Jesus recognized this with his response to a question about paying taxes: "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's" (Luke 20:25). Jesus came preaching the reality of God's kingdom to people expected to declare allegiance to the Roman emperor.

AROUND THE STATE

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AROUND THE STATE

- Youth With a Mission will host Take Action, a free youth event, March 4. Take Action will show participants the world of missions through video, drama, music and multimedia presentations. It also will feature workshops, exhibits, speakers and contemporary worship music. The event is free and includes a sack lunch, but a \$5 donation is requested to offset costs. It will be held at Twin Oaks Ranch, six miles west of Lindale from 9:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. For more information, call (903) 882-5591.



Sarah Mercer and Daniel Dill were just two of the Dallas Baptist University students author and speaker Henry Blackaby visited with following his recent speech on the campus.

Blackaby stressed to students the importance of committing their lives to the plans God had for them.

Later, at a luncheon for faculty and staff, he encouraged them not to grow weary in their efforts to make a difference in the lives of students.

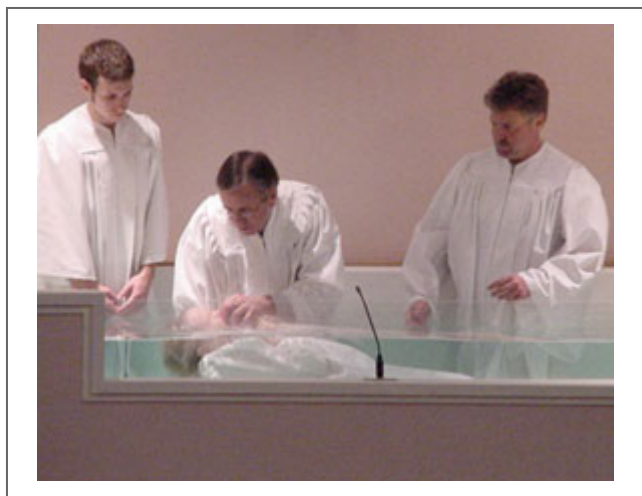
Photo by Blake Killingsworth/DBU

- Eight vocalists from the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor will join more than 250 college singers from across the southwestern United States in

performing at the American Choir Director's Convention in St. Louis, Mo., March 10. Making the trip will be Austin Daniel, Amanda Cantu, Megan Bender, Jonathan Owens, Christa Wright, Reagan Cush-man, James Venable and John Cawthon.

- A Senior Saints Summit will be held May 15-18 at the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor. This year's theme, "Being the Presence of Christ" will be led by Russell Dilday, preaching; Larry Putman, music; Bill Muske, morning devotionals; and Charlie Robinson, Bible study. Cost is \$125 per person or \$240 per couple before March 27. Costs increase \$10 after that date. Add \$20 for single occupancy. Fees include all sessions and nine meals. To register or for information, call (254) 295-4606.

- Dallas Baptist University was the host of the annual Christian Association of Student Leaders conference. Sponsored by Texas Baptist universities and the Baptist General Convention of Texas, the conference seeks to encourage fellow student leaders to make a difference on their campuses through workshops, roundtable discussions and general meeting sessions.



Pastor Jerry Raines of Hampton Road Church in DeSoto baptized 100-year-old Zula Campagna Feb. 5. Assisting Raines were Joe Bob and Chris Kindred, Campagna's grandson and great-grandson.

Buckner adoption

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Buckner adoption

Adopting a child of another race brings joy along with “a fair share of challenges, acknowledges Adela Jones, clinical director for Buckner Adoption and Maternity Services. “While your love for your child is unconditional, the world we live in demands that you deal with sometimes-difficult issues.”

In response to interest from families who have adopted across color lines, Buckner has launched Shades of Love, a family-oriented support group that will include quarterly group sharing sessions, topical seminars, fun family outings and playtime for the children.

Two founding families will lead Shades of Love, and members will determine the group's evolution, Jones said. Shades of Love is open to everyone who has adopted a child of color, whether or not the adoption was through Buckner.

Jones asked for input from interested families, “a few families willing to share the responsibility of shepherding the group” and ongoing participation.

Adoptive families find God’s love across racial lines

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Adoptive families find God’s love across racial lines

By Felicia Fuller

Buckner Benevolences

AUBREY—With her pigtails, purple separates and painted fingernails, 5-year-old Quincy is the quintessential girly girl. She even slurps fruit juice with gentility—pinkie extended, lips lightly pursed around the straw.

Melanie Avent
of Waxahachie
embraces her
two adopted
children,
Gracen and
Ross. Photos
by Russ
Dilday/Buckner
Benevolences

She is her mother made-over—apart from one feature. Quincy is black. Her mom, Heather Walden, is white—a bond made possible through adoption.

BAPTIST BRIEFS

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BAPTIST BRIEFS

Florida church considers Dallas pastor. Mac Brunson, pastor of First Baptist Church in Dallas, was slated to preach in view of a call to First Baptist Church of Jacksonville, Fla., Feb. 19. Jerry Vines has been pastor of the Jacksonville church 23 years. Brunson, 48, has been pastor of First Baptist Church in Dallas since 1999, and also serves as chancellor of Criswell College. He made announcements about the call of the Jacksonville church in each of his church's three morning worship services

Feb. 12. Brunson served previously in churches in Virginia, North Carolina and South Carolina. He was president of the Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference in 2003. Brunson and his wife, Debbie, have three children. He is a graduate of Furman University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Ministers tax guide available. Ministers can find help in preparing their 2005 federal income tax returns from an annual tax guide published by GuideStone Financial Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention. The free guide details recent changes to tax laws and their effect on ministers written by Richard Hammar, a CPA, attorney and widely published author who specializes in legal and tax issues for ministers. GuideStone's legal and compliance staff edits the guide to address tax issues that affect the greatest number of Southern Baptist pastors. The tax guide can be obtained in an electronic format by visiting the GuideStone website at www.GuideStone.org. Copies can also be obtained by calling customer service at (888) 98-GUIDE (984-8433) between 7 a.m. and 6 p.m. weekdays.

N.M. Baptists elect executive director. After a 17-month-long search, the Baptist Convention of New Mexico has unanimously elected Joseph Bunce as executive director. The assignment became effective immediately. A New Mexico native, Bunce served as pastor of churches in New Mexico and Missouri while getting his education. He earned a bachelors degree from Eastern New Mexico University, a master of divinity degree from Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and a doctor of ministry degree from Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in California. He now serves as a member of the Golden Gate Seminary board. Bunce replaces Claude Cone, who announced his plans for retirement in July 2004. Cone will continue to serve as the convention's executive director emeritus and pastor of Monterey Baptist Church in Albuquerque.

National Campers on Mission rally set. Campers on Mission will hold its national rally June 7-9 at the Dixie Classic Fairgrounds in Winston-Salem,

N.C. The event is timed so participants can join in activities related to Crossover Triad, an outreach effort designed to coincide with the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in nearby Greensboro, June 13-14. Scheduled speakers at the rally include James Atkins, pastor of West Asheville Baptist Church in Asheville, N.C., and Ken Hemphill, former president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and current strategist for the SBC's Empowering Kingdom Growth emphasis. Registration forms and further information are available at www.comnatrally2006.org, from state COM presidents or by e-mailing comnatrally2006@yahoo.com. Rally coordinator Joyce Camp can be reached at (336) 407-3250.

Ouachita seeks new education dean. Ouachita Baptist University has formed a search committee to find a new dean for the Michael D. Huckabee School of Education. Stan Poole, vice president for academic affairs at Ouachita, will chair the committee. Current Dean Jeanna Westmoreland will leave Ouachita in June when her husband, Andrew Westmoreland, becomes president of Samford University in Birmingham, Ala.

SBC registration opens. Churches that plan to send messengers to the 2006 Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in Greensboro, N.C., can register online. Registration also is open for families who plan to enroll children in the preschool child care or the children's conference, scheduled in conjunction with the SBC annual meeting. For registration information, visit www.sbc.net and click on "2006 SBC Annual Meeting."

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.

BOOK REVIEW: Baptists shape church leaders of third millennium, author says

February 21, 2006

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BOOK REVIEW: Baptists shape church leaders of third millennium, author says

By Ken Camp

Managing Editor

FORT WORTH—As Christianity's center of gravity shifts to the Southern Hemisphere, Baptists and likeminded evangelicals stand on the threshold of tremendous opportunity, said retired missions professor Justice Anderson.

Although Catholics have enjoyed established status in Latin America and Pentecostals groups have experienced explosive growth there, Baptists occupy "the golden mean between Roman Catholicism and Pentecostal extremes," said Anderson, who served as a missionary-professor 16 years at the International Baptist Seminary in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and 26 years as professor of missiology at South-western Baptist Theological Seminary.

Church fire investigations ongoing

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Church fire investigations ongoing

By Hannah Elliott

Associated Baptist Press

CENTREVILLE, Ala. (ABP)—Federal officials continue their investigation as 10 Baptist churches in rural Alabama burned in two weeks. Authorities speculated the rash of fires could be the work of two arsonists who may be “bosom buddies.”

The most recent blaze claimed the Beaverton Freewill Baptist Church, located near the Mississippi border in the northwestern part of the state. Inspectors said the fire was the work of an arsonist, and they noted witness reports about two white males in a dark-colored SUV at the scene of several of the crimes.

IMB backs away from trustee removal

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IMB backs away from trustee removal

By Robert Marus

Associated Baptist Press

RICHMOND, Va. (ABP)—Leaders of the Southern Baptist Convention's International Mission Board will ask the agency's trustees to rescind an action that asked for the removal of a trustee.

But the trustee in question, Wade Burleson of Oklahoma, said the controversy that has erupted over the board's action isn't over.