

# Missouri voters protect stem-cell research

November 13, 2006

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## Missouri voters protect stem-cell research

**By Hannah Elliott**

*Associated Baptist Press*

ST. LOUIS, Mo. (ABP)—Voters in Missouri Nov. 7 narrowly approved a [constitutional amendment](#) protecting stem-cell research in the state, causing opponents to cite deception and propaganda as the reason for their loss.

Preliminary results show the amendment passed with 51.1 percent of the votes—a winning margin of roughly 47,000 votes.

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## Megachurches shift focus to community involvement

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ABOVE:  
Heather  
Merchant  
(right)  
helps  
repaint the  
house of  
Gladys  
Serrano  
(left) with a  
team from  
Fellowship  
Bible  
Church  
North in  
Plano.  
Serrano, a  
widow, had  
trouble  
keeping up  
with her  
house  
repairs  
after her  
husband's  
death, so  
members  
the church  
offered  
their  
assistance.  
(RNS  
photos by  
Lawrence  
Jenkins)

# Megachurches shift focus to community involvement

By Adelle Banks

*Religion News Service*

PLANO (RNS)—Holding a paint roller in one hand and steadying a ladder for another volunteer with the other, Heather Merchant joined 15 fellow megachurch members in helping a widow turn her house back into more of a home.

Merchant and others in her “life group” at [Fellowship Bible Church North](#) spent a Saturday putting their faith in action, a call that’s being answered throughout Merchant’s church, which draws about 3,200 people each weekend.

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## **RIGHT or WRONG? A materialistic lifestyle**

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## **RIGHT or WRONG?**

# A materialistic lifestyle

**Our church increasingly reflects the materialistic culture around us. How can I address this issue and help people in our church recognize the incongruities between a Christian lifestyle and how they are living?**

How appropriate it is for this question to appear just before Thanksgiving. How ironic it was for me to receive it several months back, about the same time Christmas merchandise began appearing in local stores, in late September.

Many people deplore the commercialization of Christmas. Its trappings have changed drastically since a humble maiden, married to a simple carpenter, gave birth to a son in a Bethlehem stable. Yet I believe we can recapture that simplicity despite living in a materialistic culture. I have three suggestions.

[Previous Columns](#)

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## **Executive Board sets second called meeting to respond to investigation**

November 13, 2006

Updated: 11/10/06

# Executive Board sets second called meeting to respond to investigation

**By Ken Camp**

*Managing Editor*

DALLAS—The [Baptist General Convention of Texas](#) Executive Board will meet in executive session immediately prior to the convention's [annual meeting](#) to consider its response to an [investigative team's report](#) about mismanaged and misused church starting funds in the Rio Grande Valley.

The called meeting, slated from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m., Nov. 13, at the Dallas Convention Center will be the second special meeting of the board within two weeks. On Oct. 31, the board heard attorneys Diane Dillard and Michael Rodriguez and forensic accountant Carlos Barrera present evidence from a five-month independent investigation into allegations of impropriety in the Valley.

**The full report** is [available here](#) as a pdf document.

**See related articles:**

- [Pattern of exaggeration repeated in Mexico, observers say](#)
- Executive Board sets second called meeting to respond to investigation

**Previous articles:**

- [Evidence found of misuse of Valley funds](#)
- [Investigation team outlines preventative steps](#)
- [Brief excerpts from the report](#)
- [Otto Arango's earnings claims disputed by directors of missions](#)
- [BGCT faces challenges leaders say](#)
- [EDITORIAL: Executive Board must rise to the occasion](#)
- Charles Wade has posted a response to the report [here](#).

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# Around the State

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## Around the State

- The South Texas School of Christian Studies in Corpus Christi dedicated the Vernon Elmore library collection Nov. 2. The collection houses 40 years of manuscript sermons for students and guests to review. Elmore was pastor of First Church in Corpus Christi 23 years. The church and school have established a pastoral endowment in his honor to continue training ministers in South Texas.
- Dallas Baptist University will tip off the first regular-season game of its NCAA Division II basketball program Nov. 15 at Cameron University. The first home game will be Nov. 18 versus Howard Payne University. Blake Flickner is head coach. For more information, call (214) 333-5324.

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Calvary Church in Brenham recently recognized Bill Worsham (left) for 50 years of service as a deacon. He was ordained Sept. 26, 1956, at Harbor Church in Houston. William Luedemann, deacon chairman, presented a plaque on behalf of the congregation. Dean Meade is pastor.

- Richard Hutsell has been promoted to vice president for administration and finance at East Texas Baptist University. Hutsell has been employed at the school 13 years and has served as chief financial officer since 2004.
- Amy Bawcom has been named registrar at the University of Mary Hardin-



Baylor. She will coordinate both the institutional records/ registrar's office and the office of institutional research. Bawcom joined the UMHB faculty in 1997 as an English instructor.

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# **Former Mexican Mafia general baptized in Texas prison**

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## **Former Mexican Mafia general baptized in Texas prison**

**By John Hall**

*Texas Baptist Communications*

HUNTSVILLE—A man who thought he was afraid of nothing took a major step in a journey he feared could have cost him his life.

A Texas Baptist evangelist recently baptized Mauricio Cardenas, former general in the [Mexican Mafia](#), who now is imprisoned in Huntsville.

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# Baptizing & Making Disciples

November 13, 2006

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## Baptizing & making disciples

**By Barbara Bedrick**

*Texas Baptist Communications*

DALLAS - Baptists long have focused on bringing people down the aisles to make professions of faith in Christ. But how Christians live when they walk out the church doors may offer just as important a way to measure the effectiveness of a congregation's evangelism efforts, some pastors and theologians agreed.

Churches should encourage people to come to faith in Christ, but they also need to disciple members intentionally to have the largest impact they can, they said.

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Pastor  
Roland De  
Leon  
baptizes  
Lucas  
Trevino at  
Primera  
Iglesia  
Bautista in  
Corpus  
Christi.  
(Photo by  
Ruben  
Hernandez)

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## **Poll: A good night's sleep beats church**

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## **Poll: A good night's sleep beats church**

**By Adelle Banks**

*Religion News Service*

WASHINGTON (RNS)—Americans eagerly anticipate getting a good night's

sleep far more than attending church, a nationwide poll shows.

The [Barna Group](#) asked more than 1,000 adults to say how much they looked forward to any of 17 activities, ranging from sleeping to completing tax forms.

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# Bishop College may find new life

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## Bishop College may find new life

**By Hannah Elliott**

*Associated Baptist Press*

DALLAS (ABP)—Georgetown College President [Bill Crouch](#) has announced plans to revive the spirit of [Bishop College](#), a historically black school that closed in Dallas in 1988.

Crouch's plans, centered in the proposed Bishop Center for African-American Ministry, aim to re-establish the once-thriving Bishop community while at the same time to diversify the predominantly white Georgetown, Ky., school. Both schools have a Baptist heritage.

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# Book Reviews

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## Book Reviews

[The Three Hardest Words in the World to Get Right](#) by Leonard Sweet  
(WaterBrook Press)

Whether [Len Sweet](#) is writing about culture, the future, evangelism, the church, leadership or the inner life of the Christian, he makes me re-read paragraphs, wrestle with his original phrases, highlight passages and, most of all, think.

He touches on all these subjects in his latest offering while examining the simple words “I love you.” Do we truly know what we are saying when we use those words, and do we understand how those words point toward the story of God and the ministry of Jesus?

We often live by the definitions of culture rather than the Bible. If we’ll choose life as defined by Jesus, then our “deathstyles” can become lifestyles of abundance, wonder and purpose—the “God-life.”



Off the **Bookshelf**  
What's everyone reading anyway?

What are you reading that other Texas Baptists would find helpful? Send suggestions and reviews to [marvknox@baptiststandard.com](mailto:marvknox@baptiststandard.com).

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# Baptist Briefs

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## Baptist Briefs

**Arkansas Baptist philanthropist dies.** John Heflin Jr., an Arkansas businessman and philanthropist, died Oct. 26. Heflin, who died from cancer at age 61, was a major donor to Baptist causes, including the [Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Arkansas](#) and Ouachita Baptist University at Arkadelphia, where he attended college. Heflin also represented the Religious Liberty Council on the [Baptist Joint Committee](#) board. In 2004, he was named Philanthropist of the Year by the Association of Professional Fundraisers. He was a member of Second Baptist Church in Little Rock.

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**Nevada Baptist meeting includes commissioning.** The [Nevada Baptist Convention](#) included a commissioning service for 20 Southern Baptist International Mission Board short-term missionaries during its annual meeting in Reno. During the business meeting, Nevada Baptists approved a

\$2.57 million budget for 2007—a 3.5 percent increase over the current year.

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# **Military, hospital chaplains face similar challenges**

November 13, 2006

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## **Military, hospital chaplains face similar challenges**

**By Alison Wingfield & Bob Perkins Jr.**

*Cooperative Baptist Fellowship*

ATLANTA (ABP)—As a children’s minister many years ago, [Julie Rowan](#) felt stuck in a rut. Now Rowan, a chaplain in the military, rarely stays in one place. And that’s just how she likes it.

“I absolutely love it,” she said. “There’s excitement because you do something different every day. If I got out of this, I’d be bored.”