

Lebanon Baptists say goodbye to refugees, but ministry continues

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By Robert Marus

Associated Baptist Press

Aggie BSM group conducts missions research in Turkey

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By Laura Frase

Communications Intern

COLLEGE STATION—When eight students from the Texas A&M University Baptist Student Ministry traveled to Istanbul, Turkey, to conduct missionary research, they discovered their age was as much an asset as their training.

The team performed ethnographic studies—cultural surveys—in which they interviewed individuals under the age of 30, including university students.

Around the State

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Several former
pastors and
their wives
helped celebrate
First Church in
Melvin's 100th
anniversary.
They are (l-r)
Betty Gauer,
Pastor Robert
Gauer, former
Pastor Gerald
Hendon, Sandra
Hendon, Billie
Mosley, former
Pastor Maurice
Mosley, Ramona
Akins and
former Pastor
Ferris Akins.
Former
members, family
and friends
accounted for
128 of the
celebrants. Sue
Steelhammer
and the Keith
Jackson Family
provided the
special music.

Around the State

- Rutledge McClaren, director of institutional planning, assessment and research at East Texas Baptist University, will retire Sept. 1. He has served more than 45 years in higher education—41 of those years at ETBU,

serving as either a mathematics professor or an administrator.

- Six Baylor University faculty will step into roles as chairs of academic departments for the new school year. New chairs and the departments they will serve include Jaime Diaz-Granados, psychology; David Garrett, communication sciences and disorders; Danny Leonard, aerospace studies; William Bellinger, religion; Timothy Kayworth, information systems; and Allen Seward, finance, insurance and real estate.



Corinth Church in Cisco presented Pastor Benny Hagan with an etched mirror to commemorate his 22 years as the congregation's pastor. He has been a Baptist pastor for 52 years and has served several Texas churches. Corinth also was Hagan's first pastorate in 1954.

- Dallas Baptist University awarded undergraduate and graduate degrees to 230 students Aug. 4. Eighty-three graduate students and 147 undergraduates took part in the ceremonies. Joseph Kim of South Korea was the commencement speaker and the recipient of an honorary doctorate of divinity.

- The University of Mary Hardin-Baylor graduated its 150th class Aug. 5. Seventy-one students received degrees during the ceremony—65 baccalaureate degrees and six master's degrees. Amy Ivy received the award for the highest overall grade-point average. Adrienne Henderson received the Loyalty Cup, given to the student selected as the most representative of the ideals, traditions and spirit of the university.

Book Reviews

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Book Reviews

The Shark God: Encounters with Ghosts and Ancestors in the South Pacific by Charles Montgomery (HarperCollins)

Charles Montgomery, an award-winning Canadian travel writer, offers in his first book a challenging journey of both body and soul. At 10, he discovers the memoirs of his great-grandfather Henry Montgomery, an Anglican missionary to the islands of Melanesia almost a century earlier. At

30, he decides to recreate the journey through the South Pacific in order to determine the impact of Christianity on the pagan beliefs of the people.

Ultimately, the book is a journey seeking truth. Montgomery is a skeptic, both of religious faith and tribal myth.



What are you reading that other Texas Baptists would find helpful? Send suggestions and reviews to books@baptiststandard.com.

Yet he desperately desires to believe in something. The book provides relevant insight into the cynical struggle shared by many people. The conclusion he reaches may surprise you.

Baptist Briefs

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Baptist Briefs

Foundation grant benefits CBF medical missions. Cooperative Baptist Fellowship Global Missions received a \$66,000 grant from the W.C. English

Foundation to support the ministry of a CBF medical missions worker in the Middle East. The grant will benefit a CBF worker who serves as medical consultant for a micro-enterprise that hires people with physical disabilities. She offers medical screening, first aid and health education to the employees.

No medical insurance rate increases for 2007. Participants in GuideStone Financial Resources' personal medical plans will receive no rate increase for 2007—the third year in a row with no rate hike, GuideStone President O.S. Hawkins reported to the agency's trustees. Other than regular age increases, no personal medical plan participants will receive rate increases, and 40 percent will see their rates decrease, he announced. All state Baptist conventions that have their medical coverage with GuideStone will receive no rate increase in 2007, and 46 percent of the conventions will receive a rate decrease. For all other group plans, 88 percent will receive no increase, and 53 percent will receive a rate decrease.

BUA students help alumni in churches across the South

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BUA students help alumni in churches across the South

Students from Baptist University of the Americas spent most of their summer traveling through the South—not South America, but seven states south of the Mason-Dixon Line.

BUA students worked on mission projects, conducted Vacation Bible Schools and participated in community outreach efforts with Hispanic churches led by alumni of the Texas Baptist school.

“The pastors were so happy to see us,” said Cesar Casasola, a student from Guatemala. “I was surprised to find so many Guatemalans who had come to work on the poultry farms in Alabama.”

The growing Hispanic churches in these communities are a vital source of social support, as well as spiritual nurture, he noted. The students learned how growing opportunities for Hispanic workers in these communities also bring occasional cross-cultural tensions that the churches help members learn to manage.

Cartoon

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When
kindergarten
teacher
Conrad
Hjort led
worship

Artist offers new twist on ancient Christian symbols

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Scott Cavness and his brothers, Jac and Tom, use perspective sculpture to present Christians with a means to start conversations about faith. Here a mirror reflects the fish while the head-on perspective offers the cross. (Photo by George Henson)

Artist offers new twist on ancient Christian symbols

By George Henson

Staff Writer

LEWISVILLE—A new twist on a couple of Christian symbols may be just the conversation-starter needed to turn an accidental meeting into a divine appointment, a trio of Texas brothers believe.

Seen from one perspective, a cross is visible. From another, twisted metal bears no identifiable shape. A little more twist, and the fish symbol of Christianity appears.

2nd Opinion: Stem-cell stand: Right but doomed

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2nd Opinion: Stem-cell stand: Right but doomed

By David Gushee

President Bush's veto this summer of any change in his stem-cell research policy was derided by many as a sop to his conservative base. But the price the president and his party are sure to pay for this decision leads me to the conclusion that, whatever the politics of the move, the president actually has been persuaded by the moral argument against embryonic stem-cell harvesting.

Rather than simply dismiss this moral argument as "Luddite," as Rep.

Edward Markey, D-Mass., did, it would certainly demonstrate more respect for the deeply held beliefs of millions of Americans if the argument were taken seriously. It runs as follows:

However small or undeveloped an embryo might be, it is still human. It is what every one of us was at the earliest stage of life, because life develops along an unbroken continuum, from fertilization until natural death.

Russia-bound students discover missions in Dallas

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Go Now Missions workers help
Cornerstone Baptist Church in
Dallas conduct its children's
camp.

Russia-bound students discover missions in Dallas

By Laura Frase

Communications Intern

A bump in the road left three Russia-bound student missionaries in the midst of prostitution and drugs in South Dallas.

A student team originally planned to minister in Russian orphanages through Go Now Missions—the Baptist General Convention of Texas student missions program—but political turbulence postponed their trip. Three students chose to spend part of the summer at Cornerstone Baptist Church in South Dallas before traveling to Russia.



Divorce affects faith development

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Divorce affects faith development

By Deborah Potter

Religion & Ethics NewsWeekly

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (RNS)—When Jen Thompson looks at family pictures, the memories still are painful. Her parents divorced when she was 14, and along with the sense of loss came a crisis of faith.

“My father was emotionally just barren—just not available,” she said. “So I came across as thinking that my father was just impossible to please. And that definitely carried over into my relationship with God—that I felt God was just very judgmental.”

DOWN HOME: Balls of fire & divining God's will

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DOWN HOME: Balls of fire & divining God's will

Some people try to discern God's will through every detail of life. But I'm glad the Lord's plan is broader. Otherwise, I might have left the ministry exactly 25 years ago.

Joanna and I thoroughly enjoyed our lives in Georgia in 1981. But we realized I needed to get a seminary education.

The natural response would have been to return to Texas, to Southwestern Seminary in Jo's hometown, Fort Worth.

But a job opened up at Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky., and we moved about as fast as you can say "rental truck."
