

EDITORIAL: Just the antidote for social isolation

August 18, 2006

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EDITORIAL: Just the antidote for social isolation

America is an increasingly lonely place.

The average American's circle of close friends has closed significantly, signaled by a one-third drop in the number of people with whom we can discuss important matters.

These findings surfaced in research conducted by sociologists at Duke University and the University of Arizona. They compared national polls from 1985 and 2004. *American Sociological Review* published their study this summer. *Time* magazine and newswatch.com reported the findings.



The surveys revealed the average number of people with whom Americans can discuss important matters declined by almost one-third, from 2.94 people to 2.08. And nearly 25 percent of Americans said they have

absolutely no one with whom they can discuss such matters. That figure has more than doubled.

TBM helps flood victims in El Paso

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TBM
volunteer
Rey
Villanueva
tears wet
insulation
out of an
El Paso
home.
(Photos
by John
Hall)
 [Onlin](#)
[e Special:](#)
[See a](#)
[flood](#)
[relief](#)
[video](#)
[here.](#)

TBM helps flood victims in El Paso

By John Hall

Texas Baptist Communications

EL PASO—As floodwaters began to recede in much of El Paso, Texas Baptist Men volunteers rushed in to help victims of recent storms begin to put their homes back in order.

Working where as much as several feet of water entered homes, trained TBM workers from across the state started removing damaged furniture,

belongings and drywall from flooded homes in the southern and western portions of the city.



Mary Bess Jackson removes damaged drywall in an El Paso home.

ETBU World Cup Team shares gospel with soccer fans

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East Texas
Baptist
University
students
Grace
Curry and
Jonathan
Heflin
entertain
at a block
party
during the
World
Cup.
(ETBU
Photos by
Allan
Thompson)

ETBU World Cup Team shares gospel with soccer fans

By Mike Midkiff

East Texas Baptist University

East Texas Baptist University's Tiger World Cup Team journeyed to Germany this summer—not to play soccer but to share Christ with fans from around the world.

Allan Thompson, director of ETBU's Great Commission Center, led the nine-member student team, which served in Hamburg and Berlin with

International Baptist Church and the Kickoff 2006 organization.

New faith-based initiatives chief named

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New faith-based initiatives chief named

By Adelle Banks

Religion News Service

WASHINGTON (RNS)—Jay Hein, president of an Indianapolis-based international think tank, has been chosen as the new director of the Office of Faith-based and Community Initiatives.

Hein, president of the Sagamore Institute for Policy Research, will succeed Jim Towey, who left the White House post to become the president of Saint Vincent College in Latrobe, Pa., July 1.

Former inmate leads popular Bible study at state jail

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Former inmate leads popular Bible study at state jail

By Elizabeth Staples

Communications Intern

DALLAS—Seven women at the Dawson State Jail attended the first Bible study Erlinda Silva, a former inmate at the facility, taught there. Nearly nine years later, 200 women regularly attend the Thursday night Bible study.

Silva first learned about Jesus from her bunkmate during her first night in jail. After she was released, she convinced her husband they should go to church, but the Spanish service was hard for her to understand.

Student missionaries discover

love transcends cultural barriers

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Ericha Eppinger teaches students during a children's camp in Germany as part of a Go Now Missions team.

Student missionaries discover love transcends cultural barriers

By John Hall

Texas Baptist Communications

Christ's love translates into any language, according to student missionaries who served internationally this summer through Go Now Missions, the Baptist General Convention of Texas' student missions program.

People around the world are craving and seeking God's love—asking questions and coming to profess faith in Christ as Lord, students repeatedly reported during a debriefing session.

Students start spreading the (good) news in New York

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Texas
A&M
University
at Corpus
Christi
student
Adam
Lopez
teaches a
young
man using
a
computer
at the
African
Friendship
Center in
New York.

Students start spreading the (good) news in New York

By Laura Frase

Communications Intern

NEW YORK—Students hit the streets and subways of New York this summer on a mission to help meet the needs of the Big Apple.

First Baptist Church in Arlington Sunday school teacher Regina Fancher led a team of students to New York through Go Now Missions, the Baptist General Convention of Texas' student missions program.

Logsdon students experience Baptist life in Europe

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Logsdon
Seminary
students
(from left)

Nathan
Pruett,
Darrell
Smith,
Daniel

Dotson,
Chazley
Dotson,

Jaci
Jackson
and

Amanda
Cutbirth
visit the

Bebelplatz,
the

courtyard
in front of
the library

at

Humboldt
University,
where the

Nazis
burned
20,000

books in
May, 1933.

Logsdon students experience Baptist life in Europe

By Laura Frase

Communications Intern

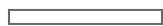
ABILENE—While students at Hardin-Simmons University’s Logsdon Seminary were hunched over their desks rapidly scribbling notes, thousands of miles away, six students explored Holocaust museums, snapped pictures of castles and cathedrals, and met European Baptist leaders.

As part of the seminary’s missions immersion class and “Baptists in Eastern Europe” class, students learned by spending one month traveling across Europe, examining the culture and meeting prominent Baptist leaders.

MAKING REPAIRS: Auto mission rebuilds engines, troubled lives

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Terry
Legan
(center)
works
with
young
men to
rebuild
a car
motor.
Legan's
Auto
Mission
helps
young
men in
legal
trouble
rebuild
their
lives.
(Photos
by
Angela
Best)

MAKING REPAIRS:

Auto mission rebuilds engines,

troubled lives

By Laura Frase

Communications Intern

HURST—Terry Legan believes no car should end up in a junkyard. Neither should a young life. Both are salvageable.

With this in mind, Legan began Auto Mission as an outlet for troubled boys because “all teenage guys are interested in cars and girls, ... and I don’t know much about girls.”



Auto Mission helps young men learn to rebuild car engines—and troubled lives.

Nolen to coordinate Cowboy Fellowship

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Nolen to coordinate Cowboy Fellowship

Ron Nolen will retire Aug. 31 from the Baptist General Convention of Texas to become full-time coordinator of the Texas Fellowship of Cowboy Churches.

Nolen, 61, has served 11 years with the BGCT, most recently as director of western heritage ministries.

Since 2000, beginning with Cowboy Church of Ellis County, he has helped start 73 cowboy churches across Texas and has a goal of 250 by the end of 2010.

Those churches formed the Texas Fellowship of Cowboy Churches, and he has served as the group's volunteer coordinator since 2004.

Ron Nolen

On the Move

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On the Move

- **J.C. Baker** has resigned as pastor of First Church in Weinert.
 - **Harold Barnes** to Hamby Church in Abilene as pastor.
 - **Eric Boykin** to First Church in Campbell as pastor.
 - **Frank Brown** to First Church in Bellmead as pastor.
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War on terror leaves refugees in limbo

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War on terror leaves refugees in limbo

By Peter Sachs

Religion News Service

WASHINGTON (RNS)—Advocacy groups are pressuring Congress to take

broader action to alleviate the plight of refugees who have been caught in a tangle of new regulations designed to keep terrorists from entering the United States.

Refugee Council USA, which includes numerous faith-based organizations, estimates as many as 20,000 refugees worldwide are being denied asylum in the United States because their activities fall within broad new U.S. definitions of helping terrorist organizations.