Federal authorities receive Valley report

December 14, 2006
Updated: 12/15/06

Federal authorities receive Valley report

By Ken Camp

Managing Editor

Baptist General Convention of Texas Executive Director Charles Wade has turned over to federal authorities the full report—including supporting evidence—compiled by a team that investigated misappropriated church starting funds in the Rio Grande Valley.

Wade notified members of the BGCT Executive Board by e-mail Dec. 11.

• See complete list of Valley funds scandal articles

Around the State

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Around the State

• Registration for spring classes at the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor will be held Jan. 8 and 9. Classes begin Jan. 10. Registration time is based on students' last names. For more information, call (254) 295-4510.

• The B.H. Carroll Theological Institute will hold its winter colloquy Jan. 15-16 at First Church in Arlington. The theme will be "The Moral Maze." David Cook of Wheaton College will be the keynote speaker. For more information, call (817) 274-4284.

• A statewide senior adult camp will be held April 23-26 at Alto Frio Encampment in Leakey. Paul Powell will be the preacher, D.L. Lowrie will lead the Bible study, and Dale Durham and Ginger McKay will lead the music. Call (830) 232-5271 to make reservations or to receive more information.

East Texas Baptist University recently unveiled the "Scarborough/Linebery Cross." The cross from the original Scarborough Chapel spire now is incorporated into a memorial to the late Evelyn Scarborough Linebery, a longtime benefactor of the school who died in 2001.

• Students from the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor, Hardin-Simmons University and Howard Payne University competed with students from 18 universities in an ethics match held in Dallas. Four students from UMHB—Lauren Graber, Danny Jeanes, Elaine Lipscomb and Ray Wilson—won first place in their division. The HSU squad—Samuel Argumaniz, Robert Hatcher and Sarah Osborn—earned a fourth place standing. The HPU students—Amanda Whisler, Shanna McCalum, Ronald Duvall and Brett Campbell—ranked in the top half of the schools competing. The competition consisted of five rounds in which two teams met before a moderator and three judges—all of whom are business leaders. The questions in the final round were about a CEO who lied on his resume about college degrees and outsourcing business and closing U.S. facilities because of rising costs. Students from UMHB received the first place trophy and a $1,000 grant to continue discussions of ethics with business leaders in their local community. Members of the HSU team received a $500 grant.

Anniversaries

Baptist Briefs

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Baptist Briefs

Arizona Baptists take steps to split gifts 50/50 with SBC. Messengers to the Arizona Southern Baptist Convention's Nov. 14-15 annual meeting unanimously adopted a missions funding growth plan to increase the percentage of Cooperative Program gifts forwarded to the SBC for national and international missions and ministries. The eventual goal is to divide undesignated Cooperative Program mission gifts 50/50 with SBC causes. Currently, 75 percent of the undesignated receipts are used in Arizona and 25 percent forwarded to the SBC. Arizona messengers adopted a $3.4 million Cooperative Program budget and a $3.8 million state convention operating budget for 2007. Next year's Cooperative Program budget is a 1.8 percent increase over the present budget, and the operating budget is down from $4 million.

BWA mission advancement director named. Alan Stanford, Baptist World Alliance regional secretary for North America, has been appointed BWA director of mission advancement. He succeeds Ron Harris, who now

works as a consultant with BWA. Stanford is pastor of First Baptist Church Clarendon in Arlington, Va., and previously served the BWA as director of promotion and development.

2nd Opinion: Getting lost in Christmas

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2nd Opinion:
Getting lost in Christmas

By BO Baker

Most of you know Christmas is my favorite time of the year. Of course, I know that scores and scores of you find the season harsh, upsetting, stressed and tear-stained, making it easy to get lost in Christmas.

Consider the truly poor who tuck their pride away long enough to accept a basket of Christmas love so their wide-eyed children can have a taste of what most of us have as normal daily fare. O yes, one can get lost in Christmas!

Face those who carry grownup grief into Christmas morning or watch with eyes of compassion as more and more of our young soldiers darken by their

deaths the hearts of their parents, marriage partners and their little children—children too young to understand why those around them are crying, wondering who and what is in that flag-draped case. Indeed, one can get lost in Christmas!

COMMENTARY: What if Jesus had not come?

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COMMENTARY:
What if Jesus had not come?

By Marcus Norris

At Christmas, we celebrate the birth of Christ. However, when you have been doing something for over 2,000 years there is a risk of losing the reason for and vibrancy of the celebration. So, in an effort to remind us "why" we celebrate his birth, consider what life would be like if there had been no babe in a Bethlehem manger.

An empty manger would mean:

• No angelic announcements.

DOWN HOME: Wanted: Yard-art Christmas Chicken

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DOWN HOME:
Wanted: Yard-art Christmas Chicken

The nightly news stirred a strong sense of deja vu a couple of weeks ago. A correspondent stood in front of a local hospital, droning in somber sincerity about two unfortunate men who lay similarly incapacitated in similar rooms.

They're both paralyzed after falling off extension ladders as they strung Christmas lights on the roofs of two-story houses.

I sympathized with those men and hoped for their healing.

But I also empathized with their plight.

EDITORIAL: A peace-full gift for a war-weary world

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EDITORIAL:
A peace-full gift for a war-weary world

Let us celebrate the birth of the Prince of Peace.

Do we ever need peace now.

If you doubt it, fly on an airplane. You'll ponder peace—or the possibility of its polar opposite, violence—as you fulfill all the requirements to board a plane in safety: From double- and triple-checked identification, to X-ray machines, to metal-detectors, to drug-scanners, to pat-downs and delays, such is the time-consuming price of peace in the airways.

Since Cain murdered Abel in the first case of religion gone wrong, the world has experienced precious little peace. The prophets railed against heart-wickedness that produced cold malice and perversity, and they predicted military annihilation as divine punishment. I just read a

fascinating article about the revolt of the Jews against Antiochus Epiphanes, a vile dictator who sought to impose Greek religion on the whole world and sacrificed a pig in the Temple in Jerusalem. Led by the brilliant general Judas Maccabeus, the Jews rose up and won a measure of victory. It was one of their finest hours. And it was bloody.

Evangelicals apply the â□□good newsâ□□ in diverse ways

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Dave and Veronica Commire attend a thriving megachurch and proudly call themselves evangelicals. (RNS photo by Dave Raczkowski/*The Grand Rapids Press*)

Evangelicals apply the ‘good news’ in diverse ways

By Charles Honey

Religion News Service

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich.—If you want to serve me, Dave and Veronica Commire heard God saying, paint this guy’s house.

So, the couple rounded up about 15 of their church friends and beautified the home of a neighbor who had lost a son and was angry at God. Telling him about Jesus had not worked; painting his house did.

Report highlights legal wrangling over Bushâ□□s faith-based initiatives

December 14, 2006
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Report highlights legal wrangling over Bush’s faith-based initiatives

By Robert Marus

Associated Baptist Press

WASHINGTON (ABP)—In a year when President Bush's "faith-based initiative" faced considerable public-relations challenges, it also continued to raise challenging legal and institutional questions, a new report from an independent group revealed.

Several lawsuits challenging the constitutionality of various aspects of the faith-based program have moved forward in federal and state courts, producing a significant victory for the program's opponents.

Green named interim president at BUA

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Green named interim president at BUA

By Brad Russell

Baptist University of the Americas

SAN ANTONIO—Baptist University of the Americas has named Jack Green—a veteran institutional leader and lifelong South Texan—interim president of San Antonio-based theological university.

Green served as president of South Texas Children's Home in Beeville from

1973 to 1998. He assumes his duties Jan. 1, concurrent with the departure of President Albert Reyes, who is leaving BUA to become president of Buckner Children and Family Services.

Jack Green

Dallas homeless choir hits all the right notes

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Choirmaster Chris Snidow (right) accompanies members of the homeless choir at the Austin Street Centre in Dallas. From left to right are (front row) Mike Ricker, Heather Butler and Rufus Barnes; (back row) Debbie Whiddon, George Alexander, Ronald Butler and Harold Baker. (Photo by Marcia Davis-Seale)

Dallas homeless choir hits all the right notes

By Marcia Davis-Seale

Religion News Service

DALLAS (RNS)—It's Wednesday morning at the Austin Street Centre. The bell in the tower clatters harshly against the cold wind, beckoning people from the streets for a pious word or two, a prayer, perhaps a cracker crumb dipped in the Communion cup.

Up in the low-ceilinged chapel loft, Chris Snidow is shifting gears from psychiatric nurse to choirmaster as his proteges straggle in for a midweek worship service. Sun streams through beveled cuts of glass, splashing stains of hot color against the smooth white walls.

â□□Low food securityâ□□ masks hunger in U.S.

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'Low food security' masks hunger in

U.S.

By Rebecca U. Cho

Religion News Service

WASHINGTON (RNS)—The U.S. Department of Agriculture has decided Americans who go without food are no longer hungry. Instead, they possess "very low food security."

In an annual report that measures Americans' access to food, the word "hunger" was omitted in favor of what the department has decided is the more scientifically accurate term.