

Elders—common title, different definitions

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Elders—common title, different definitions

By Ken Camp

Managing Editor

What do some contemporary, Calvinist and cowboy churches have in common? They all have elders.

Herschel Hobbs on church governance

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Herschel Hobbs on church governance

What would Herschel Hobbs say about elders? Who should have decision-making authority in a church?

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Hobbs—the pastor-theologian who chaired the 1963 revision of the Southern Baptist Convention’s statement of faith—wrote 35 years ago in a church training book on the Baptist Faith & Message: “The officers in a local New Testament church are pastors and deacons. ... The same office is variously called bishop, elder or pastor. ... ‘Elder’ translates the Greek word which connotes age. Among the Jews, it was used of one who because of age possessed dignity and wisdom. But in the Christian sense, it was used of those who presided over assemblies of the church.”

Citing Acts 20:28, Hobbs concluded elder, pastor and bishop are interchangeable terms, saying, “‘Elder’ in the Christian sense always refers to the same office of bishop or pastor.”

Who has authority to make decisions for a church?

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Who has authority to make decisions for a church?

By Hannah Elliott

Associated Baptist Press

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (ABP)—Sam Shaw, pastor at Germantown Baptist Church near Memphis, Tenn., had a problem on his hands. As in a growing number of Baptist churches, Germantown leaders—including Shaw—wanted to elect elders. And while many church members welcomed the change, a determined majority opposed it as a violation of Baptist traditions and biblical teachings.

Texas Baptist Forum

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Texas Baptist Forum

Faith & immigration

According to the article about Jesus demanding justice for immigrants (April 17), Albert Reyes says that I am “myopic, self-serving and legalistic.”

• [Jump to online-only letters below](#)

Letters are welcomed. Send them to marvknox@baptiststandard.com; 250 words maximum.



"Dan Brown has given the church a gift. More people in the world will be talking about Jesus on May 19 than ever before."

John Tanner

Pastor of Cove United Methodist Church near Huntsville, Ala., commenting on Dan Brown, best-selling author of *The Da Vinci Code*, which will premiere as a movie May 19.
(RNS)

"The rain falls on the just and the unjust, and it often seems to fall more on the just because the unjust have stolen the umbrellas!"

Jeanie Miley

Author and lecturer, writing in the Baptist Standard's weekly cybercolumn
"Without freedom there is no true faith, for faith coerced is no faith at all—only tyranny."

Jon Meacham

Managing editor of Newsweek magazine, speaking at the inauguration of John Lilley as president of Baylor University

"I'm not going to sit here and listen to a shirt-and-tie preacher. But I might listen to a guy in spandex, because he's like me."

Timothy "T- Money" Blackmon

Founder of Wrestling for Jesus, a wrestling-themed evangelical Christian group based in Beech Island, S.C.
(Associated Press/RNS)

I feel our brother makes several mistakes. First, the question is not about immigrants. It is, however, about those who come into our country without permission. They are correctly called illegal immigrants. I have traveled to or lived in 21 foreign countries. Every time I have visited another country, I have entered with the permission of that country.

On the Move

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On the Move

- **Larry Barnett** to First Church in Refugio as interim music director.
 - **Glen Beaty** to Mosheim Church in Valley Mills as pastor from Old Time Church in Riesel.
 - **Carl Bilderback** to First Church in Pottsboro as pastor, where he was interim.
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Tennessee Baptists reject Belmont's offer; lawsuit for control looms

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Tennessee Baptists reject Belmont's offer; lawsuit for control looms

By Robert Marus & Greg Warner

Associated Baptist Press

NASHVILLE (ABP)—Tennessee Baptists voted May 9 to reject a \$5 million offer from Belmont University that would have given the school power to elect its own trustees. Instead, the Tennessee Baptist Convention likely will now sue the university to try to retain control of the 4,600-student school.

Fellow IMB trustee criticizes Burleson

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Fellow IMB trustee criticizes Burleson

By Hannah Elliott

Associated Baptist Press

ENID, Okla. (ABP)—In what could lead to another attempt to remove trustee Wade Burleson from the International Mission Board, a fellow trustee of the Southern Baptist agency is publicly criticizing Burleson for his views on baptism, alcohol and other subjects.

Dobbses say IMB response 'inaccurate'

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Dobbses say IMB response 'inaccurate'

By Hannah Elliott

Associated Baptist Press

DALLAS (ABP)—Wyman and Michelle Dobbs, the Southern Baptist missionaries recently threatened with termination by the International Mission Board and then reinstated, say the IMB's description of their reinstatement is "inaccurate and inappropriate."

Cybercolumn by Berry Simpson: Stuck

May 12, 2006

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CYBER COLUMN: Stuck

By Berry Simpson

OK, so I had another one of those city-dweller experiences for the first time: I got stuck in an elevator. It was in the Western National Bank Building, and I was headed toward my office on the 12th floor. I was riding with Marshal, a banker, who was hoping to get off on the 11th floor.

The elevator stopped like it was supposed to at the 11th floor, but the doors refused to open. We pressed the buttons again and again, but to no effect. Marshal phoned his office to send help, while I picked up the elevator emergency phone.

Berry D. Simpson

Critics note Floyd's stingy CP giving, controversial ministry innovations

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Critics note Floyd's stingy CP giving, controversial ministry innovations

By Greg Warner

Associated Baptist Press

SPRINGDALE, Ark. (ABP)—News of the nomination of Arkansas megachurch pastor Ronnie Floyd to be the next Southern Baptist Convention president has brought new attention to his church's high-tech evangelism methods and lackluster financial support of the denomination he wants to lead.

Pat Robertson labels Americans

United 'communist'

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Pat Robertson labels Americans United 'communist'

By Robert Marus

ABP Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON (ABP)—Christian broadcaster Pat Robertson is once again making waves with comments on his 700 Club television broadcast—this time criticizing a church-state watchdog group he frequently battles.

RIGHT of WRONG? Insisting on retirement package

May 12, 2006

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Right or Wrong?

Insisting on retirement package

Our church has hired a staff person who is slightly less than 30 years old. We typically have not provided retirement assistance for staff members, but this one has insisted on it. Don't you think the person is being a bit overbearing?