

Texas Baptist Forum

January 6, 2006

Posted: 1/06/06

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Frog in the kettle

Your editorial chiding Christians for “angry, militant proclamations of 'Merry Christmas'” (Dec. 19) reminded me of a recent experience I had at lunch with my wife and another couple.

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



"Lost: 29 trees. Gained: More light."

Calder Baptist Church

A sign on the Beaumont church's property during cleanup from Hurricane Rita. Jim Fuller is the pastor.

"Anti-Christian persecution and discrimination around the world ... is ugly, it's growing, and ... the mass media seem to generally ignore or downplay its gravity."

Charles Chaput

Catholic archbishop of Denver, speaking at a panel discussion on religious freedom on Capitol Hill. (The Washington Times/RNS)

"I want to give all of my body to my husband."

Katie McMunn

A 17-year old who promised abstinence until marriage when she slipped on a "chastity ring" at a pro-abstinence event in Pittsburgh. (The New York Times/RNS)

"Hip-hop has what all corporate America wants-18-35-year-old employed adults with growing families. That's why you see Russell Simmons producing clothes, Snoop Dogg hawking Chrysler. Everyone wants us. Why not the church?"

Tommy Kyllonen

Senior pastor of hip-hip Crossover Community Church in Tampa, Fla. (USA Today/RNS)

As we prepared to partake, we held hands and said a blessing. A nearby diner rose and complained to the manager that our public display had offended him and his companion, who were atheists. The manager told him he would in the future seat the man in a prayer-free section.

Witnessing, I had always thought, was an essential part of Christian living. If we surrender to atheists on issues such as “Merry Christmas” or public creches or elimination of any mention of Christ in public school, will we be like that frog that starts out in the pan of tepid water and, as the heat is gradually raised, accommodates himself to the condition until he finally is boiled and dies?

In your last paragraph, you quote John 3:16, and you italicize “whosoever.” Perhaps you should have italicized the next and clarifying phrase, which is: “believes in him.”

Bill Bruce

Houston

Support for missionaries

I am concerned for the financial support of Southern Baptist missionaries around the world. As far as I know, international missions are primarily supported by the Southern Baptist Convention through the Cooperative Program and the Lottie Moon Offering.

However, Baptist churches are leaving the ultra-conservative SBC and joining one of the moderate state or national conventions/fellowships. How does the money get collected and distributed to the international missionaries?

Van Penrod

Houston

Editor's note: The Baptist General Convention of Texas collects and distributes special offerings according to the churches' wishes. Those include the Lottie Moon Offering for the SBC International Mission Board and the Global Missions Offering for the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, as well as the BGCT's own Mary Hill Davis Offering for Texas Missions and its World Hunger Offering, plus the Annie Armstrong Offering for the SBC North American Mission Board.

Appeal for reconsideration

I was grieved to learn of the recent decision by our International Mission Board trustees to exclude those who speak in tongues from missionary service.

Rather than allow the spectrum of Southern Baptist life to be represented by our missionary personnel, recent decisions have excluded a significant number of faithful Baptists. There is a silent but important minority of Baptists who use the gift of tongues in doctrinally sound and nondivisive ways.

These faithful Christians should not be disqualified over a gift of the Spirit that Scripture clearly teaches should not be forbidden (1 Corinthians 14:39). Even the Apostle Paul would be disqualified for missionary service through the IMB under this new policy (1 Corinthians 14:18).

I appeal to IMB trustees to reconsider. One can understand when missionary personnel are disqualified for immorality or immaturity, but how can we justify disqualifying missionary candidates over a gift from God?

Heath Powers

Runge

Time to reach

As the former gang member Stanley “Tookie” Williams was executed in California and the talk shows were filled with discussions about it, I heard one comment that Scripture upholds capital punishment. I agree that it does, but we must also consider that although it upholds capital punishment when necessary, it does not teach that it is in God's will for us to rejoice over taking a man's life.

Instead, we (as Christians) should feel sorrow over Williams taking innocent lives and his apparent lack of repentance and making his peace with God before having to face judgment of where he will spend eternity. Every soul is precious!

Scripture teaches us there is time for us to obey, but also there comes a time when no one can work. I wonder how many tried to reach him with the gospel while he was alive on this earth? And how many wasted their time complaining about the material side?

Daniel Younger

Itasca

More on Crimm

Unbeknownst to me, some very kind Texan, whose identity I now know, submitted a Texas Tidbit on my behalf concerning my interest in evangelist B.B. Crimm-“Cowboy Crimm” (Dec. 2). As a result, three people have contacted me; and not only have I heard some new tales, but I have made three fine new friends.

If anyone knows Raymond Goforth from Lancaster, I would appreciate hearing from him again. He left a call on my recorder but was cut off before he was able to leave his telephone number. My numbers are (336) 454-0828, home; (336) 686-2043, mobile; and (919) 761-2249, office. My e-mail address is jlutzweiler@sebts.edu.

James Lutzweiler, archivist

Southeastern Seminary

Wake Forest, N.C.

SBC hypocrisy

I am constantly amazed at the blatant hypocrisy of the Southern Baptist Convention.

First, we are told that we ought to boycott Disney because of “gay days” at their theme parks. Second, many fundamentalists within the convention warned parents about Harry Potter because of its fascination with witchcraft and wizardry, although, I dare say, most of those criticizing the books have never read them.

A small yellow rectangular logo with the words "ONLINE ONLY" in black, uppercase letters.

Then, as soon as the SBC’s LifeWay Christian Resources finds an opportunity to use a Disney movie about a lion, a witch and a wardrobe to make a fast buck, they get in bed with Disney, advertising LifeWay stores as “your Narnia headquarters.”

Go figure.

Mark Johnson

Macon, Ga.

News of religion, faith, missions, Bible study and Christian ministry among Texas Baptist churches, in the BGCT, the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) and around the world.