

# Texas Baptist Forum

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### **Revelation of chaos**

Regarding the Marriage Protection Amendment: Nature, theology, history, reason and common sense demonstrate marriage is between one man and one woman. Also, a myriad of scientific studies support the need of a child for both father and mother.

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Letters are welcomed. Send them to [marvknox@baptiststandard.com](mailto:marvknox@baptiststandard.com); 250 words maximum.



*“Prayer is a foundation of our relationship to God. We don’t spend enough time listening to God because we do too much talking.”*

**John Verciglio**

Pastor of Cahaba Heights United Methodist Church in Birmingham, Ala.  
(The Birmingham News/RNS)

*“If (Dan) Brown makes us worry about people falling away from Christianity, perhaps instead we should address the deeper systemic issues in our churches and homes that leave our children malnourished in their spiritual formation and ill-equipped to engage their world with the claims of Christianity.”*

**Gary Long**

Pastor of Willow Meadows Baptist Church in Houston, critiquing some Christians’ fear that The Da Vinci Code would prevent people from placing their faith in Christ (Not a Sermon—Just a Thought weblog)

*“Quite frankly, I’m more interested in seeing our Hispanic friends afforded citizenship in heaven than I am seeing them become Americans. Having their souls redeemed by the red blood of Christ is more important than having their worker status confirmed by the green card of Uncle Sam.”*

**Wiley Drake**

SBC gadfly and pastor of First Southern Baptist Church in Buena Park, Calif. (BP)

The attempt to redefine marriage is an argument based on emotion that is contrary to truth and to a stable society. It is a selfish argument willing to deform the basic institution of civilization—marriage—in order to legitimize an immoral lifestyle—homosexuality. Those who love God and people must speak this truth in this love at this time.

How insane and what an appalling revelation of cultural chaos that the definition of marriage has come to a vote. Our forefathers would have wept over such an outrageous sign of moral implosion and decay.

Still, with lawsuits threatening to undermine every U.S. marriage law, the need for a constitutional amendment protecting marriage from lawsuits and agendas has become apparent. Now is the crucial time when our elected representatives ought to be hearing from everyone who values the sanctity of marriage as only and properly between one man and one woman. Much more importantly, now is the time when our hearts must break before the throne of God in prayer—prayer from an agony of spirit that refuses to let this country go to hell while there is still opportunity to intercede.

Joe Goodson

Rosebud

## **Battling Baptists**

The Wade Burlesons, Paige Pattersons, Tom Hatleys and all the other ultra-conservatives are battling each other now over International Mission Board policies. Guess they can't find any moderates left to chew on, so they're going after each other.

I'm sure I'll be around to see the Southern Baptist Convention come back to its more moderate base.

Mick Tahaney

Port Arthur

### **Women in ministry**

Concerning “Baptist women in ministry face ongoing challenges” (May 15): Thankfully, women were involved in ministry from the beginning of the church. They are to be cherished and highly esteemed because they are created in God’s image and his blessing. Nowhere are they described in Scripture as less able than men.

However, God’s word is our authority (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21), and the article fails to use any biblical reasoning when the need for women pastors was expressed. These are incredibly important positions of authority for teaching and preaching God’s word (2 Timothy 4:1-5; Titus 2:15; 1 Peter 5:2 compare with John 17:17).

A woman pastor takes authority over her husband and the men in the church. This contradicts God’s instruction (Ephesians 5:22-25; 1 Peter 3:1-5; Colossians 3:18-19). There is no biblical reason that God’s structure for the family changes in the local church. 1 Timothy 2:12 says, “But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man.” The command is based on Genesis 1 (1 Timothy 2:13-14), not Paul’s own culture or opinion.

We should believe what God tells us. He calls men to lead by knowing, teaching and living out God’s word. It’s a matter of “what does God say?” not “what do we feel?” If this is wrong, please show me from God’s word and not from emotional or human reasoning apart from the Scriptures.

Brian Thompson

Duncanville

### **Not a good role model**

I read about Ronnie Floyd's forthcoming nomination by Johnny Hunt for president of the Southern Baptist Convention and Floyd's wonderful accomplishments for the kingdom. However, I also read that Floyd's church, First Baptist in Springdale, Ark., gave a paltry 0.27 percent of its budget last year through the SBC Cooperative Program.

The church gave an additional \$189,000 (1.6 percent) to the SBC allocation budget, bypassing the cooperative effort of the state convention budget along with its vital ministries. I do not see that as a good role model.

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If Southern Baptists follow Floyd's example of such dismal CP support, our seminaries and their students would be in a crisis, to say the least.

Ironically, the 2006 convention that will hear Floyd's nomination will also hear a report from the Ad Hoc Cooperative Program Committee that will encourage "the election of state and national convention officers whose churches give at least 10 percent of their undesignated receipts through the Cooperative Program."

I have no doubt Floyd and his supporters are people of integrity and conviction. That is not the issue. The issue is Floyd's ability to lead our denomination by example. One good way to judge his ability is this: Let him show us how to take a megachurch currently giving 0.27 percent through the CP and lead that church to a more substantive level of support. At that point, he will have my vote.

Robert Davis

Jesup, Ga.

### **Struck dead for lying**

A recent editorial reminds us there is more to morality than sex (May 1). I don't know of a single reference in the New Testament where anyone was struck dead because of sexual misbehavior. Of course, we know this behavior is sin and should be avoided.

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On the other hand, in Acts 5, we read of a man and his wife who were struck dead for lying. Could this be a message that God isn't pleased with this act of immorality?

What if Americans, particularly folks who call themselves Christians, had taken lying seriously for the past 30 years and not tolerated it in our religious and political leaders? The landscape in our political institutions and churches would be changed, and a lot of folks would be in another line of work. Our \$8 trillion national debt would be significantly less, and we wouldn't be bogged down in a war in Iraq with few real supporters. Our religious institutions would gain credibility and be a real influence again.

I believe our acceptance of the practice of lying may be the most significant act of immorality being practiced in our nation today.

Carl L. Hess

Ozark, Ala.

### **Thanks to Wade, Gunter**

I would like to publically thank BGCT Executive Director Charles Wade and

Chief Operating Officer Ron Gunter for their vision and leadership in transforming the BGCT into what is rapidly becoming one of the most flexible and responsive denominational structures to be found anywhere.

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As a leader in the Cowboy church movement—one of the fastest-growing church movements ever witnessed by Texas Baptists—I have had to make some unprecedented requests to the convention to help resource this great outpouring of God’s Spirit. In every case, these men have received me warmly, listened attentively and responded in such a way to ensure the continued advancement and success of the movement, always putting the Kingdom of God ahead of politics, personalities or even bureaucratic structure.

As a result, there will be 80 rapidly growing Cowboy churches affiliated with Texas Baptists by the end of this year—each of them giving 6 percent to 8 percent to the Cooperative Program and baptizing dozens of new believers each year.

Experiencing God teaches that we should seek to discover where God is work and join him there. It seems this is precisely what Charles Wade and Ron Gunter are positioning our convention to do. Texas Baptists should be thankful for their vision and leadership. We should also pray for them daily, because change does not come easily to such a large organization. Yet never has the BGCT been better positioned to accomplish meaningful ministry at the grassroots level.

Gary Morgan

Waxahachie

**Many will believe *Da Vinci Code***

I agreed with your editorial, "Is it Code or evangelistic opportunity?" (May 15) about 98 percent.

The book or movie *The Da Vinci Code* does not concern me at all, and I don't feel threatned by it. But I disagree with your quote: "Will movie patrons believe it? Only the ones who believe giant gorillas actually hang from the Empire State Building."

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There are people who believe Charleston Heston is Moses and Elvis is still alive. There will be many, many people who will walk away from the movie convinced it is absolutely true.

I heard a remark about the book and movie but cannot remember who made it or the exact wording but it goes something like this: "Dan Brown is not concerned about the biblical scholars or the well-versed Christian. He knows they won't believe his book. But, the unversed Christian and non-Christian, those are the ones he will convince his book is the truth."

F.A. Taylor

Kempner

### **Stay away from divisive political issues**

I was startled to see that a Baptist General Convention of Texas task force has called for a fair (its word) public policy regarding citizenship for illegal immigrants. Is this *déjà vu*?

One of our other conventions has inserted itself into the political process and has alienated many people. Its witness for Christ has suffered. We



should not step onto that path.

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Illegal immigration appears to be the most contentious hot-button political issue in our nation today. We need to minister to the physical and spiritual needs of these people, and we do, and we will. We should not involve ourselves in what many people view as matters of law enforcement and amnesty.

There are many differing and contradictory views on what is a fair resolution of this matter.

William Wood

Houston

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.