

Baptist Briefs

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ABP Names Interim Development director. The [Associated Baptist Press](#) board hired an interim development director at a recent meeting. Todd Heifner, managing partner of Charles Heifner Associates of Birmingham, Ala., will work six-to-nine months as development director for ABP and the strategic alliance formed between ABP and three Baptist state newspapers—the *Baptist Standard*, the *Virginia Religious Herald* and the *Missouri Word & Way*. Heifner, who holds master's degrees in business administration and institutional advancement, previously worked in development for the Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty and Samford University.

Candidate claims Baptist identity. Republican presidential candidate John McCain raised questions about his religious affiliation with a comment at a recent campaign stop in heavily Baptist South Carolina. The Associated Press reported McCain answered a question about how his Episcopal faith affects his decision-making by saying: "It plays a role in my life. By the way, I'm not Episcopalian. I'm Baptist." McCain previously had identified himself as Episcopalian and is listed that way in several congressional directories. But he also has acknowledged that for years he and his family have attended North Phoenix Baptist Church when at home in Arizona. He had said in the past his wife and family had been baptized at the church, but he had not. However, Associated Press reported McCain indicated in his South

Carolina comments he was an “active member” of the North Phoenix church.

Ethics commission honors Fu. Trustees of the Southern Baptist Convention’s Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission recently voted to honor Bob Fu, a leader in the student democracy movement that ended in the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre. Trustees named Fu the 2007 recipient of the John Leland Religious Liberty Award. Fu was imprisoned after Chinese authorities discovered he had started a Bible school in an empty factory building. Fu and his wife fled from China in 1996. In 2002, Fu founded China Aid Association, an organization that seeks to draw international attention to human rights violations against house-church Christians in China.

Judge declines to drop suit against Southwestern. A U.S. District Court judge refused [Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary’s](#) request to dismiss an employment lawsuit filed against the school and its president by a former theology professor. The judge ruled the case can proceed with an amended complaint against the seminary. Sheri Klouda claims she was wrongly denied tenure because she is a woman after she was hired for a tenure-track position in 2002. The seminary maintains her tenure denial is consistent with a policy enacted after her hiring that stipulates only men should teach men in theology.

Way paved for GuideStone to offer its own insurance. The Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee approved legal documents to allow [GuideStone Financial Resources](#) to set up five new subsidiaries providing investment financial advice, its own property and casualty

insurance, and its own life insurance. GuideStone President O.S. Hawkins said with its own insurance company, GuideStone will be able to lower costs for church property and casualty insurance, and it will be able to expand what it offers participants in terms of life insurance.

News of religion, faith, missions, Bible study and Christian ministry among Baptist churches, in Texas, the BGCT, the nation and around the world.