

BaptistWay Bible Series for January 14: Practice love beyond the limits

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Practice love beyond the limits

• John 13:1-17, 34-35

By David Wilkinson

RIGHT or WRONG? Christian Reconstructionism

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RIGHT or WRONG?

Christian Reconstructionism

I recently heard about “Christian Reconstructionism.” Some facets of it seem to run counter to historic Baptist distinctives. Is that a valid conclusion?

Evaluation of Christian Reconstructionism is difficult for two reasons. First, there is diversity and even division in the movement on key issues. Second, the literary output of the movement is so enormous there is always the possibility of having missed some nuance. Certainly Rousas Rushdoony’s *Institutes of Biblical Law* and the works of [Gary North](#) are important resources for understanding this movement. Many features of Christian Reconstructionism are faithful renderings of Christian doctrine and as such will be favorably viewed by most Baptists. These would include the authority of Scripture, the necessity of salvation by grace through faith and the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ to transform our world by the work of the Holy Spirit. At least one major aspect of Christian Reconstructionism will create distance between it and important Baptist distinctives, however—its understanding of the relationship between biblical law and civil government. Christian Reconstructionists insist they do not seek Christianization of the political order by a minority of believers so as to impose a biblical ethic “on a pervasively unbelieving populace.”

[Previous Columns](#)

Texas Baptist Forum

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Texas Baptist Forum

'Baby Jesus'

Merry Christmas. And, oh, by the way, there is no more "baby Jesus."

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

Out ((Loud))

“There are people who feel ‘excluded’ by Christian symbolism and are offended by the manger and the angels and the Child, but there have always been humorless, legalistic people. Complaint is an American art form, and in our time, it has been raised to an operatic level. To which one can only say: ‘Get a life.’”

Garrison Keillor

Author and radio personality (RNS)

“My sense so far speaking to people is that they are understanding. They’re taking the high road and being compassionate, not condemning her.”

Oscar Isaac

Actor who plays Joseph in *The Nativity Story*, speaking about the revelation that actress Keisha Castle-Hughes, who plays Mary, is pregnant and unwed at age 16.

(USA Today/RNS)

“If I really want to last in life, I’ve got to stop and realize there’s a whole journey of life to live. I’ve got to remember it’s not how fast I live that’s important; it’s how well I live.”

Rick Warren

Pastor of Saddleback Community Church in Southern California

(www.pastors.com)

“Let us pray for brotherhood and for all humanity.”

Pope Benedict XVI

Joining Mustafa Cagrici, the grand mufti of Istanbul, in prayer beneath the dome of the Blue Mosque, one of the most prominent landmarks in the Muslim world, in Istanbul (RNS)

As one who has a relationship with God through his Son, Jesus the Messiah, I am disturbed by the image of a baby in a manger that is so prevalent at this time of year. The reasoning for this is that children can relate easily to a baby when being taught about Jesus.

At face value, the statement sounds good. I can buy into the idea of children relating to a “baby Jesus” when they are “introduced” to the Lord. But even children understand the concept of growing up.

Baptist battles dominated news in 2006, editors say

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Baptist battles dominated news in 2006, editors say

DALLAS (ABP)—The election of a pastor outside the fundamentalist power structure as president of the Southern Baptist Convention was chosen by Baptist journalists as the most important story in Baptist life in 2006—a year when denominational affairs outweighed world news in the minds of Baptists of the South.

The election of SBC President Frank Page by discontented conservatives and the resignation of Bob Reccord as head of the North American Mission Board, after a probe found ineffectiveness and extravagant spending, were

the most important Baptist news stories of the past year, an annual survey of journalists conducted by Associated Baptist Press revealed.

Meanwhile, the controversy between “blogging trustee” Wade Burleson and the SBC International Mission Board and a scandal in the Rio Grande Valley over funding for phony church starts also commanded the attention of Baptists. The shift in power to a Democratic-controlled Congress was the only non-Baptist story to crack the top five.

Top five stories identified were:

Amish response to violence rated top 2006 newsmaker

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An Amish family arrives to pay their respects at the White Oak farm of Chris and Rachel Miller, who lost two daughters when a gunman killed five girls at an Amish school. (RNS photo by Robert Sciarrino/*The Star-Ledger* of Newark, N.J.)

Amish response to violence rated top '06 newsmaker

By Jason Kane

Religion News Service

WASHINGTON (RNS)—The Amish community that inspired the world with acts of forgiveness after a Pennsylvania schoolhouse shooting has been named the newsmaker of the year for 2006 by the Religion Newswriters Association and Beliefnet.

The multi-faith spirituality website Beliefnet.com noted the Amish community topped its list of newsmakers for demonstrating “courage, forgiveness, self-sacrifice and love” after a gunman entered an Amish schoolhouse in October and shot 10 girls before taking his own life. The Amish community reached out to the killer’s family, offering monetary and emotional support. Several attended his funeral.

DRINK TO THAT? Have Baptists watered down their objections to alcohol?

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DRINK TO THAT? Have Baptists watered down their objections to alcohol?

By Ken Camp

Managing Editor

A growing number of Baptists may have brought in the New Year by raising a glass of something a bit stronger than iced tea, some cultural observers speculate. Baptist attitudes toward alcohol consumption seem to be in transition, they insist.

Consider the spirited debate—and debate about spirits—sparked last summer when messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting approved a resolution opposing the consumption of alcoholic beverages—and an amendment disqualifying imbibers from service as trustees of SBC entities.

Alcoholism: No easy fix or single remedy

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Alcoholism: No easy fix or single remedy

By Jennifer Sicking

University of Mary Hardin-Baylor

BELTON—Alcoholism presents a multifaceted problem—too varied for one

all-purpose remedy or a single approach to ministry for those who battle the disease, said Ty Leonard, psychology professor at the [University of Mary Hardin-Baylor](#) and director of the school's Community Counseling Center.

For churches that want to help the wounded in their congregations and communities battle addictions, Leonard offered words of advice.

Around the State

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Around the State

- [Houston Baptist University](#) will hold a three-day expression of faith through the arts Jan. 25-27. "Credo: The Arts as Expressions of Belief" will include a concert in Jones Hall with the HBU Choral Union and the Houston Symphony conducted by Krzysztof Penderecki, the Polish composer of "Credo;" an evening vespers service with new musical works; an art exhibit hosted by the Museum of Printing History; and lectures by Marilynne Robinson, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of Gilead, and Gregory Wolfe, founder and editor of Image, a national literary quarterly. All events are open to the public and free. For more information, visit www.hbu.edu/credo.
- One hundred and nine students graduated from [East Texas Baptist University](#) during fall commencement ceremonies last month. George

Mason, pastor of Wilshire Church in Dallas, delivered the charge to the graduates.

- Two hundred seventy-three students earned academic honors at [Howard Payne Uni-versity](#) during the fall semester. One hundred and six students maintained perfect grade-point averages, while 96 were named to the Dean's List and 67 to the Honor Roll.

- Marilyn Edwards has been named the 2006 Faculty Member of the Year at [Dallas Baptist University](#). The award corresponds with her 10-year anniversary of service at the school. She is an assistant professor of psychology and a member of Park Cities Church in Dallas.

Exhibits feed the publicâs hunger for biblical history

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The traveling
“From Abraham
to Jesus” exhibit
walks visitors
through the story
of 2,500 years in
the Holy Land
using a
combination of
antiquities from
biblical times
and multimedia
special effects.
(RNS photo
courtesy of A.
Larry Ross
Communications)

Exhibits feed the public’s hunger for biblical history

By Rebecca U. Cho

Religion News Service

WASHINGTON (RNS)—A box believed to contain the remains of the son of Simon of Cyrene—the man the Bible says carried Jesus’ cross to his crucifixion—is traveling the United States. Meanwhile, curators are preparing the earliest-known manuscript of the Ten Commandments for display next year in San Diego. At the same time, archaic writings testifying to the status of Scripture throughout centuries lie behind glass in

Washington, D.C.

With simultaneous exhibits of biblical artifacts on display or in the works across the nation, the museum world and the general public cannot seem to get enough of the Bible.

Documentary explores faith of televangelists' son

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Documentary explores faith of televangelists' son

By Shona Crabtree

Religion News Service

WASHINGTON (RNS)—After a year of being closely shadowed by a camera crew, Jay Bakker—the tattooed and body-pierced son of televangelists [Jim and Tammy Faye Bakker](#)—finally is getting his private life back.

But viewers across the country have a chance to watch his year in review on the [Sundance Channel](#) in [One Punk Under God](#), a six-part documentary that began airing in December and ends Jan. 17.

Jay Bakker,
son of
televangelists
Jim and
Tammy Faye
Bakker, is
the subject of
a Sundance
Channel
documentary
series, *One
Punk Under
God*.

Book reviews

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Book reviews

[*Reimagining Evangelism: Inviting Friends on a Spiritual Journey*](#) by
Rick Richardson (InterVarsity Press)

“Evangelism as closing the deal on a sales call” is an approach that will become less prevalent as the days progress, according to Rick Richardson. Even Christians find this approach a hindrance in their quest to follow

Christ. Instead, normal conversation is the best way to share your faith. Investing in another person's life provides the opportunity for them to hear and observe your everyday life and fall in love with Jesus through your expressions and example.

Off the Bookshelf
What's everyone reading anyway?

What are you reading that other Texas Baptists would find helpful? Send suggestions and reviews to books@baptiststandard.com.

Reimagining Evangelism's premise is that each believer is a missionary sent by God. The task is not delegated to a special few. A missionary understands and applies the gospel within a person's culture. All church members are to assist others on their spiritual journey. The unfocused spiritual journey of each nonbeliever can become a beginning point for you, as a Christian, to engage others in a lifetime of Christ-likeness.

Baptist Briefs

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Baptist Briefs

African Baptist leader dies. Frank Adams, general secretary of the [All Africa Baptist Fellowship](#), died Dec. 27 in Kumasi, Ghana, after several months of chronic illness. Adams, who also served as Baptist World Alliance regional secretary for Africa, was previously general secretary for the Baptist Convention of Ghana. Adams was a graduate of Baptist Theological Seminary in Rüschtikon, Switzerland, and the Oxford Center for Mission Studies in the United Kingdom. He is survived by wife Selina, two sons and one daughter.

Deadline nears for China pen-pals. The Fellowship of Baptist Educators is seeking about 2,000 students in grades 7 to 12 to answer letters and become pen-pals with young people in China. Jan. 15 is the deadline for requesting letters through the Christian Corresponders project, now in its 16th year. For more information, write John Carter with the Fellowship of Baptist Educators at Samford University, Box 292305, Birmingham, Ala., 35229, e-mail j-fcarter@juno.com or call (205) 822-4106.