

Cartoon

January 4, 2007

Posted: 1/05/07

“Backsliding,
no doubt.”

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

2nd Opinion: Six tips for building better sermons

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2nd Opinion: Six tips for building better sermons

Every weekend, bold Christians stand up in church and do something many parishioners wish they wouldn't do: They preach.

They stand inside lofty pulpits, behind lecterns or out among the people. Some hold a Bible; some hold a remote control for advancing electronic slides.

Some have spent hours in preparation; others “phone it in” and hope it doesn’t show.

It’s a strange activity, preaching. Jesus nearly got tossed off a cliff when his first sermon offended his audience. Early preachers Peter and John converted thousands by their preaching—and also got arrested and imprisoned. Stephen was stoned to death after a sermon calling his audience a “stiff-necked people.”



Baptists in the House of Representatives

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<p>Baptists in the House of Representatives</p>
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29 Democrats:

Barbara Lee, D-Calif.
Juanita Millender-McDonald, D-Calif.
Corrine Brown, D-Fla.
Kendrick Meek, D-Fla.
Sanford Bishop, D-Ga.
John Lewis, D-Ga.
John Barrow, D-Ga.
David Scott, D-Ga.
Jesse Jackson Jr., D-Ill.
Danny Davis, D-Ill.
Julia Carson, D-Ind.
William Jefferson, D-La.
Albert Wynn, D-Md.
Steny Hoyer, D-Md.
Elijah Cummings, D-Md.
Carolyn Kilpatrick, D-Mich.
John Conyers, D-Mich.
Donald Payne, D-N.J.
Gregory W. Meeks, D-N.Y.
Edolphus Towns, D-N.Y.
G.K. Butterfield, D-N.C.
David Price, D-N.C.
Heath Shuler, D-N.C.
Stephanie Tubbs Jones, D-Ohio
Chaka Fattah, D-Pa.
Lincoln Davis, D-Tenn.
Eddie Bernice Johnson, D-Texas
Alan Mollohan, D-W. Va.
Gwen Moore, D-Wis.

31 Republicans:

Terry Everett, R-Ala.
Mike Rogers, R-Ala.
Spencer Bachus, R-Ala.
Trent Franks, R-Ariz.
John Boozman, R-Ark.
Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif.
Dana Rohrabacher, R-Calif.
Duncan Hunter, R-Calif.
Vern Buchanan, R-Fla.
Lynn Westmoreland, R-Ga.
Nathan Deal, R-Ga.
Donald Manzullo, R-Ill.
Ron Lewis, R-Ky.
Geoff Davis, R-Ky.
Harold Rogers, R-Ky.
Rodney Alexander, R-La.
Roger Wicker, R-Miss.
Chip Pickering, R-Miss.
Sam Graves, R-Mo.
Roy Blunt, R-Mo.
Steve Pearce, R-N.M.
Frank Lucas, R-Okla.
Henry Brown Jr., R-S.C.
J. Gresham Barrett, R-S.C.
David Davis, R-Tenn.
Zach Wamp, R-Tenn.
Louie Gohmert, R-Texas
Mike Conaway, R-Texas
Randy Neugebauer, R-Texas
Randy Forbes, R-Va.
Virgil Goode Jr., R-Va.

New Congress displays America's religious diversity

January 4, 2007
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New Congress displays America's religious diversity

By Jonathan Tilove

Religion News Service

WASHINGTON (RNS)—The new Congress will, for the first time, include a Muslim, two Buddhists, more Jews than Episcopalians and the highest-ranking Mormon in congressional history.

Roman Catholics remain the largest single faith group in Congress, accounting for 29 percent of all members of the House and Senate, followed by Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, Jews and Episcopalians.

See Related Articles:

- [Baptists in the House of Representatives](#)
- [Religious affiliations of Texas congressional delegation](#)

DOWN HOME: Are you too old to wear corduroys?

January 4, 2007

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DOWN HOME: Are you too old to wear corduroys?

Joanna took me shopping, but she didn't stay long enough to protect me from the sales clerk. Oh, the humiliation.

Like most guys I know, I'm a buyer, not a shopper. The difference is the agenda. A buyer's agenda is short. He knows what he wants and goes looking for it. Nothing else matters. If he's shopping for jeans, and the store is selling \$65 dress shirts for a nickel, he'll come home only with jeans. But a shopper's agenda is open. She may need a blue sweater, but if she sees fuchsia pumps at a great price, she'll come home with fuchsia pumps. And the blue sweater.

As a hard-shell buyer, I prefer to "shop" on the Internet. The Internet eliminates all the challenges of shopping—huge malls, parking, crowds, distractions and sales clerks. You type the name of the item you need, look at the options, make your pick, pay, and you're done.

But my wife of 10 these many years knows that, while I'm pretty good at buying dress shirts online, my wardrobe would look like a uniform if that's

the only way I bought clothes.

EDITORIAL: Prophecies needed for coming year

January 4, 2007

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EDITORIAL: Prophecies needed for coming year

A few years ago, (Actually, exactly seven years ago, January 2000. Remember [Y2K?](#)) our Sunday school quarterly focused on apocalyptic literature—mystical passages from the Old Testament books of Zechariah and Daniel, as well as mesmerizing passages from the New Testament book of Revelation. The first Sunday, our classroom nearly burst. We started the lesson several minutes late because we had to haul in chairs for all the folks who came to hear the teacher predict The End of the World as We Know It.



Within 30 minutes, I conducted the most effective ensmallment campaign in the history of Sunday school. The majority of our first-time visitors weren't impressed when I told them: "Every passage in the Bible meant something to the people who first heard or read it. Sustained by the power of the Holy Spirit, it meant something to each succeeding generation. Thank God, it also means something for us today. But we would be indescribably arrogant to assume biblical prophecy meant nothing to all the believers in all the years up until now and was written only for people alive today." Most of the newcomers never came back. If you can't get the inside scoop on what the Mark of the Beast really looks like and determine the true identity of the Antichrist, why bother with Bible study?

This episode returned to memory Jan. 2, when televangelist [Pat Robertson](#) predicted [a terrorist attack would produce "mass killing"](#) in the United States this year. Oh, really. This from the TV preacher who predicted the U.S. coast would be "lashed by storms" and the Pacific Northwest would be smashed by "something as bad as a tsunami," both of which could happen randomly but both of which have not come true.

When you think about it, you can understand why religionists like Robertson stir up a following. People are curious. They want to know the future, whether it's the next terrorist attack, or a wave the size of Mount Rushmore, or the date when Jesus returns. That's why pastors who put on "biblical prophecy" seminars make money. Problem is, people confuse prophecy with prediction or, as [Beth Newman](#) of the Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond calls it, fortunetelling. But prophecy is something entirely different. "In Scripture, the prophets deliver a word from the Lord that always carries with it a self-judgmental call to repent, to turn to God, to be God's people," Newman explains.

Graham named among most-admired in poll for 50th time

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Graham named among most-admired in poll for 50th time

By Adelle M. Banks

Religion News Service

WASHINGTON (RNS)—Evangelist Billy Graham has been named in the Gallup Poll's top 10 "most-admired" men list for a record 50th time.

In a poll taken in mid-December, the 88-year-old evangelist came in fifth.

Billy Graham

After 52 years at one church, pastor has no plans to quit

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After 52 years at one church, pastor has no plans to quit

By George Henson

Staff Writer

SPRING—Earl Hahn, age 84, has served as pastor at Faith Temple Baptist Church in Spring 52 years, and he has no intention of stopping now.

“As long as the Lord lets me, I’m going to keep preaching. I just continue to feel that’s his will for my life,” he said.

Texas Legislature faces critical issues

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Texas Legislature faces critical issues

By John Hall

Texas Baptist Communications

AUSTIN—Texas legislators appear poised to tackle issues that need critical attention, including medical insurance and criminal justice, as the legislature convenes Jan. 9, said Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission Director Suzii Paynter.

“Texas is really at a turning point for its future,” she said. “Unfortunately, we are at sort of the last leg in some very critical areas. Unfortunately, we’re leading the nation in uninsured. Unfortunately, we’re leading the nation in pollution rates. Unfortunately, we’re leading the nation in the dropout rate. These are very critical issues for our state.”

Texas Baptist Forum

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Texas Baptist Forum

‘Fixing’ immigration

The recent well-publicized immigration raid on the Swift & Co. meatpacking plant in Cactus, in the Texas Panhandle, serves as a troubling reminder that our immigration system is broken and needs to be fixed.

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

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

Out ((Loud))

“Being in the position I am today, I do feel like a looking glass, where people living in the West can view Islam, and Muslims can view another culture. I feel comfortable looking at both and living in these two distinct zones.”

Yusuf Islam

The singer/songwriter formerly known as Cat Stevens, speaking about how his 1978 conversion to Islam allows him to live in two different realms

(USA Today/RNS)

“I’m not in the ‘Who’s Who’ of Baptists. I’m in the ‘Who’s He?’ of Baptists.”

Frank Page

Dark-horse candidate who won election as president of the Southern Baptist Convention in 2006 (RNS)

“Our tolerance is part of what makes Britain, Britain. So conform to it—or don’t come here. We don’t want the hatemongers, whatever their race, religion or creed.”

Tony Blair

British prime minister (AP/RNS)

“You meet the Lord in prayer every day. The idea of meeting him is, while disquieting, not something I think I am afraid of.”

Francis George

Chicago Roman Catholic cardinal, who was facing surgery for bladder cancer (Chicago Tribune/RNS)

Texas businesses want and need to follow the law. Unfortunately, they lack a sensible and reliable system to verify an employee's legal status.

Employers are forced to navigate tricky waters each time they make a hire. Texas businesses must deal with complex immigration regulations; a glut of seemingly valid, but sometimes counterfeit, worker identification documents; and the threat of discrimination lawsuits if they ask the "wrong" questions about employees' documents.

Volunteers warm orphans' hearts and feet in Moldova

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Chris Love, a member of Bethel Baptist Church in New Caney, fits a pair of insulated boots onto a boy who lives at the Sarata orphanage in Moldova.

Volunteers warm orphans' hearts—and feet—in Moldova

By Craig Bird

Baptist Child & Family Services

Clay Palmer handed a thin, poorly dressed Moldovan child new white socks and got the typical excited smile. But what happened next was totally unexpected.

Instead of moving to the next station where volunteers were fitting children for insulated winter boots, the boy grinned broadly and headed back out the door.

On the Move

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On the Move

- **Mike Acker** to Lebanon Church in Cleburne as minister of youth.
- **John Allen** to First Church in Godley as minister of youth.
- **Gary Anthony** to First Church in Temple as minister of music from Gaston Oaks Church in Dallas.
- **C.E. Barnett** to Mount Pleasant Church in Kosse as pastor.