

Texas Baptist Forum

October 26, 2007

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Secret searches

I agree with Professor Roger Olson that Baptist pastor-search practices are wrong ([Oct. 1](#)). But the real vice is the pretended secrecy of the process. An abrupt pastoral departure can result in disillusionment, anger and grief in the church. It is also rough on the departing pastor; some compare it to the feeling of cheating on your spouse.

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

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



"When I was an atheist, I thought Christianity was a dying religion.

That's nonsense; it's like an explosion going off all the time."

Anne Rice

Author of Christ the Lord: Out of Egypt, who previously wrote best-selling stories about witches and vampires (*Charisma/RNS*)

"I'm very proud when I look and see guys praying in the end zone or praying after (a game). I see these guys as my sons. I gave birth to them. I see that as my purpose for playing in the NFL."

Herb Lusk

Former NFL running back, now pastor of Greater Exodus Baptist Church in Philadelphia, on being the first player to pray in the end zone after scoring a touchdown (*Washington Post/RNS*)

"The No. 1 lesson which makes the American people different from the politics of the news media of Washington is that this is a country that is sick and tired of (partisanship) and wants red-white-and-blue solutions."

Newt Gingrich

Former U.S. speaker of the House, speaking to a "values voters" rally (*ABP*)

Search committees are sworn to secrecy to “protect the continued ministry” of candidates. Nevertheless, the committees on which I have served were startled to learn how quickly word would spread, first among other ministers and then other congregations. Only the target church, which needs most to know, is kept in the dark.

What is more important than God’s call to members and ministers of a church? We are missing a huge opportunity to support our ministers when we keep the process “secret.” It is vanity to think we can protect the continued ministry of a pastor. That is up to God to do.

BGCT launches distinctive online missions connector

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BGCT launches distinctive online missions connector

By John Hall

Texas Baptist Communications

The Baptist General Convention of Texas plans to launch a one-of-a-kind website Oct. 29 designed to connect churches and individuals and mission opportunities around the globe.

The site—Beonmission.org—is believed to be the only online missions broker that depicts missions opportunities of multiple agencies and organizations graphically rather than through a simple database, allowing users to sift and sort through more worldwide service opportunities quickly.

On the Move

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On the Move

- **Philip Oswald** to First Church in Dallas as contemporary worship leader from First Church in Wichita Falls, where he served in the same position.
 - **Matthew Richard** to Spring Creek Church in Meridian as pastor.
 - **Jennifer Wills**, a student at Baylor University, to First Church in Cranfills Gap as youth minister.
 - **Joseph Kirby** to First Church in Sinton as youth director.
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Senator backs off on funding earmarked for religious group

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Senator backs off on funding earmarked for religious group

By Bill Walsh

Religion News Service

WASHINGTON (RNS)—Bowling to pressure, [Sen. David Vitter](#), R-La., has backed off an attempt to steer \$100,000 to a Christian group that supports teaching religious and alternative theories of creation alongside evolution in science classrooms.

Vitter took heat from educational, religious and civil rights groups for earmarking money in a fiscal 2008 spending bill for the [Louisiana Family Forum](#), “to develop a plan to promote better science education.”

Texas Tidbits

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Texas Tidbits

Search committee interviews candidates. The committee searching for the next Baptist General Convention of Texas executive director is in the process of interviewing candidates. The committee plans to meet with about 10 candidates, and several interviews have been completed, said Chairman Ken Huggins. The committee has determined it will fulfill its appointed task of putting forth an executive director nomination and will not suggest the BGCT Executive Board seek an intentional interim executive director, he said. BGCT Executive Director Charles Wade has announced he will retire at the end of January.

BGCT budget workshop planned. David Nabors, chief financial officer and treasurer of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, will lead a workshop about the proposed 2008 budget at 10 a.m., Oct. 29, during the BGCT annual meeting in Amarillo. The workshop is titled "How are We Doing More Together Through the Cooperative Program?" Nabors will talk about the ministries supported through the BGCT Cooperative Program and answer questions regarding the proposed budget. The workshop will be in Room 110 of the Amarillo Civic Center.

TOGETHER: Details about the

â€¢'08 budget process

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TOGETHER:

Details about the '08 budget process

Baptists love to do our Lord's work. Generally, we would much rather focus on that work than on the detailed finances that lie behind the work of missions, evangelism and ministry.

This year, in Texas Baptist life, the reality of our financial situation has seized our attention. As messengers prepare to consider the proposed 2008 budget, it is good to share some details about this process.



Executive Director
BGCT Executive
Board

The past few years, we have had to deal with basically a flat rate of growth in Cooperative Program giving. In 2000-01, we lost about \$5 million in CP giving as more than 400 churches pulled away from the BGCT. That stabilized in 2002, and CP giving began to grow slightly over the next

years.

As we have restructured our staff, there has been a time of transition in which we have moved people to new assignments, emphasized getting our staff into the field and closer to the churches and their concerns, and committed ourselves to be servants of the local churches.

Communities feel the squeeze of accelerated church growth

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Communities feel the squeeze of accelerated church growth

By Amy Green

Religion News Service

ORLANDO, Fla. (RNS)—Some neighbors complain about too many Wal-Marts or too many strip joints in their midst. In southeast Orlando, it's too many churches.

About a dozen churches—Baptist, Nazarene, Pentecostal and independent—are located within a few miles of each other on the city's outskirts, and more are under construction.

Where your treasure is...

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Where your treasure is...

By Ken Camp

Managing Editor

Advocates of Christian education and human care institutions insist their ministries represent the best example of what Texas Baptists can accomplish when they work together. But they fear what budget decisions over the last decade mean for the future of cooperative giving.

Changes in accounting make direct comparisons somewhat difficult. Some institutions and ministries—such as Baptist University of the Americas and chaplaincy—have moved from one funding category to another in recent years.

• See chart of CP funding of education institutions below

Students explore world of opportunities during Mary Hardin-Baylor missions week

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Students explore world of opportunities during Mary Hardin-Baylor missions week

By Carol Woodward

University of Mary Hardin-Baylor

BELTON—Students who wanted to know how God could use an accountant or an athlete on the mission field found answers to their questions during Mission Emphasis Week at the [University of Mary Hardin-Baylor](#), Oct. 22-26.

Lori Brown, who serves with Sports Plus in Kenya, told students she asked the same questions when she was in college. She wanted to be involved in missions, but she wondered how or where God could use her.

UMHB student
Amanda Foss
listens as Twyla
Bell describes how
children in
Tanzania make
their own soccer
balls out of pieces
of material and
twine.
(Photo/Carol
Woodward/UMHB)

Conservative 'values voters' insist on anti-abortion candidate

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Conservative 'values voters' insist on anti-abortion candidate

By Hannah Elliott

Associated Baptist Press

WASHINGTON (ABP)—Voters in a recent straw poll seemed to confirm what many pundits have said all along: Conservative Christians simply will not support a presidential candidate who backs abortion rights.

In the second-largest straw poll of this campaign, 5,775 self-described “values voters” said they will vote for former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney in the 2008 election. Longshot Mike Huckabee, the Southern Baptist minister and former Arkansas governor, came in a close second, only 30 votes behind Romney.

Yale panelists ask: ‘Is there a theological foundation for political engagement?’

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Yale panelists ask: ‘Is there a theological foundation for political engagement?’

By Hannah Elliott

Associated Baptist Press

NEW HAVEN, Conn. (ABP)—Theologians, lawyers, pastors and ethicists

shared their views on the theological foundations of political engagement during a recent exchange at Yale Divinity School.

The daylong event, called ["Voices & Votes II: Shaping a New Moral Agenda."](#) was co-sponsored by *Sojourners*, *Christianity Today* and *The Christian Century*.

Greg Boyd

Separation of church and state great but misunderstood by many, panelists insist

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Separation of church and state great but misunderstood by many, panelists insist

By Hannah Elliott

Associated Baptist Press

NEW HAVEN, Conn. (ABP)—The separation of church and state is part of what makes America great, and America is plagued by “total ignorance” about what it means, panelists at a Yale Divinity School event said.

However, not even all the expert panelists agree on how the pesky details of church-state separation work themselves out in real life.