

Book reviews

September 29, 2007

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Book reviews

[Premium Roast with Ruth](#) by Sandra Glahn (AMG Publishers)

In *Premium Roast with Ruth*, the newest addition to the Coffee Cup Bible Study Series, award-winning author and seminary professor Sandra Glahn brings the biblical character Ruth to her reader's front doorstep.

Glahn presents a panoramic picture of Ruth's world, the history of Israel and Moab—spiritual climate, Levitical laws, Israelite customs and past relationship between the two nations—while showing how it all correlates with the world of the “21st century woman with cell phones, washing machines and SUVs.”

Other Bible studies cover the book of Ruth, but the rich blend of warm anecdotes, engaging questions, in-depth extra-biblical research, aesthetics and sensitivity to the current reading audience, as well as the audience of biblical times, is where Premium Roast uniquely shines. At the author's website (www.aspire2.com), we even find recipes that use barley!



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

Baptist Briefs

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Baptist Briefs

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.

Cartoon

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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: A better way to

find pastors

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2nd Opinion: A better way to find pastors

By Roger Olson

Recently, our church was invaded by a group of thieves. Well, not exactly, but that's how it felt to us. We only discovered the deed later when our beloved pastor announced her resignation. The group of thieves were a pastoral search committee from another state. They infiltrated our Sunday morning worship service and conspired to persuade our pastor to move to their church.

It's a little difficult to be very hard on them. That's how we got her to come to our church nine years ago! Our pastoral search committee flew hundreds of miles to the church she was then pastoring in another state and infiltrated its Sunday morning worship service and conspired to persuade her to come to our church.

You might think I'm being a little hard on pastoral search committees. And, of course, I am—for the purpose of provoking thought about a tradition that needs re-consideration.

DOWN HOME: Fox-in-a-bottle outwits squirrel

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DOWN HOME: Fox-in-a-bottle outwits squirrel

Joanna noticed the dead spot first.

While everything else on our lot still shimmered brilliant green, the top eight or 10 feet of the center branch in our favorite maple in the middle of the backyard turned bitter brown.

Not golden amber or rustic crimson, like you might expect of a maple in North Texas six weeks or two months from now. Just bitter brown. Dead brown. This-branch-ain't-coming-back brown.



We craned our necks to see what had happened up there, near the top of the third-most-stately tree on our property. (I'm partial to the bald cypresses.) We saw a strip of bare, withering trunk where bark used to be.

EDITORIAL: If we don't change, this is just Round 1

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EDITORIAL:

If we don't change, this is just Round 1

Painful and dispiriting as it was, the Baptist General Convention of Texas Executive Board's recent vote on the 2008 budget was both secondary and inevitable.

The board voted 52-28 to recommend a \$50.1 million budget, which will be considered by messengers to the BGCT annual meeting in Amarillo Oct. 29-30.

Obviously, \$50 million is serious money. It will fund a vast array of ministries. Lives will be changed because Texas Baptists invested in them. This is substantial.



But the 2008 goal represents a decline of almost \$500,000 from this year's budget. That's a major reduction, especially when our state is growing,

needs are expanding and the cost of ministry is increasing. The 2008 budget also points to pain. It means eliminating 25 to 30 Executive Board staff positions.

Faith Digest

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Faith Digest

Game designed to foster understanding. A mechanical engineer from Lincoln, Neb., has designed a question-and-answer game to promote interfaith awareness. John Cooper created “7th Heaven,” a game that tests players’ knowledge of Judaism, Islam and Christianity in a way intended to help people junior high school age and older enjoy learning about different religious practices. Cooper began thinking about the concept a couple of years ago after he met some Iraqi refugees while volunteering at the People’s City Mission in Lincoln. Conversations with refugees and others led him to explore common themes shared by the three faiths.

Insurer rejects pro-homosexual church. A United Church of Christ congregation’s pro-gay stance puts it “at a higher risk” of litigation and property damage, a leading U.S. church insurer said in refusing to offer coverage to a Michigan congregation. Brotherhood Mutual, a Fort Wayne,

Ind.-based insurance company, turned down the business of the West Adrian United Church of Christ after learning the church publicly endorses same-sex marriage and gay clergy. “Based on national media reports, controversial stances such as those ... have resulted in property damage and potential for increased litigation among churches that have chosen publicly to endorse these positions,” wrote Marci J. Fretz, a regional underwriter for Brotherhood Mutual, in a July 30 letter to the West Adrian Church. Brotherhood Mutual declined to offer a quote to the church located in Adrian, Mich. Another insurer covered the church.

Use “moral imagination” in addressing global warming, expert says

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Richard Cizik,
vice president of
the National
Association of
Evangelicals,
talks to students
at Hardin-
Simmons
University's
Logsdon School
of Theology
about creation
stewardship.
(Photo/Victor
Cristales/Abilene
Reporter News)

Use 'moral imagination' in addressing global warming, expert says

By Ken Camp

Managing Editor

BILENE—"Premillennial pessimism" and blind allegiance to politicians backed by big oil companies contribute to evangelicals' relative silence about the threat of global warming, said Richard Cizik, the [National Association for Evangelicals](#)' vice president for governmental affairs.

In a Hardin-Simmons University chapel address, Cizik challenged students

to use “moral imagination” in exercising stewardship of the world God created.

Energy-efficient green churches have more money for ministry

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Energy-efficient green churches have more money for ministry

By George Henson

Staff Writer

WALKERTOWN, N.C.—Churches gradually are becoming more environmentally conscious about their facilities—and that green-consciousness is growing.

In some cases, business people in churches have seen the economic benefits that come with energy efficiency at work. Some members have heard news coverage about global warming and the need to conserve natural resources. Other congregations have members interested in the creation care movement that teaches God gave people responsibility of caring for the environment, and it is time to do a better job.

See related articles:

- [It's not easy being green](#)
 - [Use 'moral imagination' in addressing global warming, expert says](#)
 - Energy-efficient green churches have more money for ministry
 - [Some evangelicals go green, but skepticism lingers](#)
 - [10 steps to help save the world](#)
 - [Providing clean water is life-giving work, biologist says](#)
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Some evangelicals go green, but skepticism lingers

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Some evangelicals go green, but skepticism lingers

By Adelle M. Banks

Religion News Service

WASHINGTON (RNS)—When Harry Jackson saw melting glaciers and devastated forests on a recent trip to Alaska, he decided global warming should be a higher priority on his list of key issues for evangelicals.

“I thought the globe was warming, but I thought that there was a whole lot of hype attached and there were not a lot of practical solutions presented,” said Jackson, pastor of a megachurch in Beltsville, Md.

Rob Bell is pastor
of Mars Hill Bible
Church in
Grandville, Mich.

He says
evangelicals need
to take greater
action on the
environment.

(RNS
photo/Zondervan)

10 steps to help save the world

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10 steps to help save the world

By Hannah Elliott

Associated Baptist Press

NEW YORK (ABP)—With all the talk of global warming, environmental degradation and increase in pollution-caused disease, it's easy to get overwhelmed. But experts say changing just a few daily habits can help alleviate some of those problems. And if enough people make those changes, it'll benefit the whole world.

Here are 10 simple things everyone can do to go green—and improve their own quality of life in the process.

Providing clean water is life-giving work, biologist says

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Providing clean water is life-giving work, biologist says

By Melissa Browning

Cooperative Baptist Fellowship

ATLANTA (ABP)—When Darrell Smith explains the development work he does in Macedonia, he often tells the story from Luke’s Gospel of Jesus cleansing the lepers.

“Jesus healed them simply because they asked,” said Smith, a mission worker with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. “They did not have to listen to a sermon. They were not required to do anything in order to receive healing. In fact, Jesus knew that 90 percent would never say thank you or give him a second thought. But he healed them anyway.”

By working
to provide
clean
water,
Darrell
Smith is
able to
share about
the faith in
Christ that
motivates
his work.
(Photo/CBF)