

Baptist Briefs

August 30, 2007

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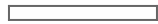
Blog endorsements? Never mind. Several high-profile Southern Baptist Convention leaders—including SBC President Frank Page, International Mission Board President Jerry Rankin, LifeWay President Thom Rainer and Union University President David Dockery—have withdrawn their endorsement of the SBCOutpost.com blog, a forum created by reform-minded pastors within the convention. In a column carried by Baptist Press, the communications arm of the SBC Executive Committee, Page wrote: “Personal attacks are on the rise. I recently removed my endorsement ... when a hoped-for and needed place for dialogue on the Internet degenerated quickly into a place of personal attack against denominational leaders as well as those who are advocating reform. For Christ’s sake, stop!”

Calvinism conference set at seminary. Founders Ministries—a group devoted to advancing Calvinist doctrine in the Southern Baptist Convention—will team with Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary to sponsor a national conference on Calvinism Nov. 26-28 at Ridgecrest Conference Center. The conference, “Building Bridges: Southern Baptists and Calvinism,” will include speakers from Southeastern, Southwestern and Southern seminaries, along with several pastors and LifeWay representatives.

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: Social workers & Christ's mission

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2nd Opinion: Social workers & Christ's mission

By Diana Garland

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and your neighbor as

yourself,” Jesus said. Most of us learned the Greatest Commandment as children, and yet too many of our churches focus only on the first part. We want the most effective worship leaders our church budgets can afford. The time, energy and expertise we pour into planning worship speak to our love of God.

But what about the time, energy and expertise we pour into planning for the way we love our neighbor? Social workers educated as church leaders can help the church stand firmly on both legs of the Greatest Commandment. The congregational social worker is to community ministries and missions what the pastor and minister of music are to worship. Social workers can lead congregation members to pour themselves into the needs of the world and to do so effectively in ways that transform not only the people being served, but also those who serve.

Social workers communicate the gospel of hope in ways that empower. We help hopeless people find hope. We connect babies and children who have been orphaned or whose parents cannot care for them to families who will love them for a lifetime. We equip a couple with the tools to make or mend a marriage. We help those without a home find a home. We organize an impoverished community to develop economic resources. That’s powerful, and that’s the kind of power social workers bring to congregations—hope restored, lives changed, joy renewed.

Social workers also are heroes. When a social worker connects a high-school dropout with mentors in a congregation who encourage and support him through a job-training program, that social worker is a hero to that young man. When a social worker helps a church embrace community members who have special needs, or organizes a community to oust its drug dealers and attract businesses—these are heroes. That’s the kind of recognition in a community or city these social workers can bring to the church: The church—a place where people find holistic salvation. Wouldn’t

it be great if that's how our congregations were known and experienced—as places of salvation?

Court says Seattle-area school can deny charter to Bible club

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Court says Seattle-area school can deny charter to Bible club

By Robert Marus

Associated Baptist Press

PORTLAND, Ore. (ABP)—A federal appeals court ruled a Washington state high school is not required to charter a Bible club, since the club allows only Christians to be full members.

In *Truth v. Kent Public School District*, a unanimous three-judge panel of the Oregon-based 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals said Kentridge High School in Kent, Wash., does not have to offer official recognition to the Truth Bible Club.

DOWN HOME: You-know-what will break your heart

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DOWN HOME: You-know-what will break your heart

Football will break your heart.

There. Now I've said it. Be warned.

This is a prophetic utterance for fall. Unless, of course, you cheer for the Southlake Carroll Dragons or the University of Southern California Trojans. Your heart probably won't be broken. But everybody else, get ready. As sure as linebackers block extra points, runners fumble, receivers muff passes and centers hike the ball over punters' heads, if you love football, your heart is about to be pummeled, chop-blocked and penalized 15 yards for wanting too much from your favorite gladiators of the gridiron.

Even though Major League Baseball pennant races are heating up (just not in Texas), the local sports pages are overflowing with football.

Church swims upstream by moving downtown

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Church swims upstream by moving downtown

By Rebekah Hardage

Communications Intern

WACO—Migration from downtowns to the suburbs doesn't seem to be slowing down. And because families are moving to the suburbs, churches are moving there too. But one church in Waco is swimming upstream by relocating downtown.

[Acts Christian Fellowship](#), a Baptist church, recently began renovation of property in downtown Waco where the church plans to turn a warehouse into a sanctuary.

Faith Digest

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Faith Digest

Colorado megachurch approves Haggard's successor. New Life Church, the Colorado megachurch whose leader Ted Haggard was dismissed last year after a sex and drug scandal, has approved a new senior pastor. Brady Boyd, pastor at Gateway Church in Southlake, received more than 95 percent approval in a vote by the Colorado Springs congregation, a church secretary/treasurer announced in a message posted on New Life's website.

Kennedy retires from Florida church. D. James Kennedy, who used his Florida-based television ministry to establish himself as a leading voice for religious conservatives, has retired from Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church in Fort Lauderdale. Kennedy, 76, suffered a cardiac arrest in late December and has not returned to his pulpit of more than 48 years since falling ill. Kennedy started the congregation, affiliated with the Presbyterian Church in America, in 1959. He became a well-known Christian broadcaster through his presidency of Coral Ridge Ministries, which broadcast his sermons. He also pioneered the Evangelism Explosion personal Christian witness training.

Ethicists debate morality of

enhancing genetics

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Ethicists debate morality of enhancing genetics

By Kim Lawton

Religion & Ethics NewsWeekly

WASHINGTON (RNS)—Scientists already know which genes are responsible for particular illnesses, and clinical trials are under way to find new treatments for genetically based diseases. But, ethicists ask, what if this newfound genetic knowledge is used not only to cure, but also to enhance physical and mental capabilities—and enable parents to select traits of their children?

“Aiming at giving our kids a competitive edge in a consumer society—that, in principle, is a goal that is limitless,” said Harvard University professor Michael Sandel, a member of the President’s Council on Bioethics.

New forum’s ambitious

goal—get the world's Christians talking

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New forum's ambitious goal —get the world's Christians talking

By Adelle M. Banks

Religion News Service

WASHINGTON (RNS)—Like cousins at a big family reunion, representatives of the various streams of Christianity from across the globe will gather this fall near Nairobi, Kenya.

The [Global Christian Forum](#) is a rare opportunity for Christians who don't always speak to each other—and in some cases have never met—to spend a few days together and simply get to know one another.

Illinois church knowingly placed convicted sex offender in

pulpit

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Illinois church knowingly placed convicted sex offender in pulpit

By **Michael Leathers**

Associated Baptist Press

ROMEDEVILLE, Ill. (ABP)—Despite warnings from a denominational official as well as another church, a Southern Baptist congregation near Chicago allowed a convicted child molester to preach for years.

In the end, it took media inquiries for Jeffrey Hannah, 42, to relinquish his leadership positions at, and resign as a member of, First Baptist Church of Romeoville, Ill.

Texas Baptist Forum

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Texas Baptist Forum

Moment of silence

The story about the “moment of silence” law in public schools ([Aug. 20](#)) is simply not believable. Every honest person knows the real motivation for such a requirement: It is an obvious and unconstitutional backdoor attempt to inject religion into the public schools.

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

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



“Children rarely embrace spiritual principles and practices that their parents fail to demonstrate in their lifestyle.”

George Barna

Religion-trends researcher (BP)

“Now that reading has become more difficult, I probably read the Bible less but pray more. Of course, over the years, I’ve memorized many passages from the Bible, and I’m especially thankful now that I did this. I wish we gave more attention to Bible memorization in our churches today.”

Billy Graham

Evangelist (Minneapolis Star Tribune/RNS)

“Watching one of your own children die is horrible, and many people in Africa have experienced that. Equal to that is knowing you are going to die and not being able to care for your children. This is why women in the U.S. are getting so involved in AIDS. We can look at women in Africa and realize they are just like us.”

Lynne Hybels

Co-founder of Willow Creek Community Church in South Barrington, Ill., on the global AIDS crisis (Sojourners/RNS)

The common-sense remedy for a situation like this is not proper and thorough training for teachers. The solution is as Jesus commanded in Matthew 6:5-6. Apparently, what Jesus commanded is not sufficient for Texas.

Public school teachers can teach students about all of the religions of the world, but they have no business explaining anything about “prayer” to their students. “Prayer” is understood by all as a matter of religion, and it is dishonest to assert otherwise.

BGCT sends \$20,000 to help Minnesota flood victims

August 30, 2007

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BGCT sends \$20,000 to help Minnesota flood victims

By John Hall

Texas Baptist Communications

DALLAS—The Baptist General Convention of Texas has sent \$20,000 to the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention to help victims of [flooding in southeastern Minnesota](#).

Widespread flooding damaged more than 4,500 homes in the region. At least 243 homes were destroyed, and seven people died.