

Religion still ‘marginalized’ in foreign policy

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Religion still ‘marginalized’ in foreign policy

By David Anderson

Religion News Service

WASHINGTON (RNS)—U.S. foreign policy officials have shown an increased understanding of religion’s importance to American diplomacy, but the government’s activities in that area display a “lack of strategic thinking” that hampers efforts abroad, according to a new report.

U.S. officials do not have “a clear set of policy objectives or tactical guidelines for dealing with emerging religious realities,” said the 92-page report from the [Center for Strategic and International Studies](#), a nonpartisan think tank in Washington. “Offices, programs and initiatives are more often happen-stance than coherent.”

Burned Iraqi children need medical supplies; chaplain seeks help

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Burned Iraqi children need medical supplies; chaplain seeks help

By John Hall

Texas Baptist Communications

DALLAS—A Baptist General Convention of Texas-endorsed Army chaplain is encouraging churches to send medical supplies to support a U.S. military-run medical clinic in Iraq for child burn victims.

Mark Richardson, a military chaplain endorsed by the Baptist General Convention of Texas, boards a plane for Iraq. Richardson has requested medical supplies for a clinic for burned Iraqi children.

Needed: medical supplies include bandages, dressings, medical scissors and hydrogen peroxide. [Here is a complete list of requested items.](#)

Items can be mailed directly to Chap. Mark Richardson, CSC Scania, APO AE 09331. For more information, call Reba Gram at 888-244-9400 or e-mail Reba.Gram@bgct.org.

U.S. military personnel treat as many as 100 young people a week in South Central Iraq during the winter and 25 a week during the summer. One in

five patients is burned as a result of the conflict there. Most of the burns are a result of accidents, since many Iraqis cook with gasoline and heat their homes with diesel heaters.

Texas Baptist Forum

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Texas Baptist Forum

Future of missions

Discussion of the need for career missionaries and their role ([July 9](#)) contained quotes that show an incomplete view of missions.

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

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



"We've got to give a very strong message, I speak to the Muslims now, that these martyrs aren't going to heaven. These sinners are very much going to hell."

Shahid Malik

British minister of international development and a Muslim, on violence committed in the name of Islam (CNN/RNS)

"Instead of looking at global warming as Jerry Falwell has called it, 'Satan's diversion,' we should see it as a note from God that says: 'I said to be a steward, my children. Sin has consequence, and if you pollute this earth, there will be a price to pay. But it's not too late, and with my help you can restore Eden.'"

Richard Cizik

Vice president for governmental affairs of the National Association of Evangelicals, quoted among a dozen people giving "12 Ideas for the Planet" (Newsweek/RNS)

"I can't think of a religious group he didn't offend. He even did a cartoon that upset the Episcopalians, and you know how hard it is to upset Episcopalians."

John Shelton Reed

Longtime friend of the late editorial cartoonist Doug Marlette (*The Washington Post*/RNS)

To say sending congregational members overseas is cheaper is based on incomplete accounting: It costs much more because of the proportion of travel costs, but this falls on individuals and does not show up as a budget line item. Also, to say outsiders should never plant churches overlooks the fact the first congregations in a community, whether defined by barriers of language, religion or distance, will always involve outsiders. Subsequent church multiplication will be done by local believers.

Serious ministry depends on language abilities, cultural awareness and trust. These are developed over time. People on a typical mission trip usually are dependent on translators, unable to build relationships with any but a few locals who speak English well.

Most Muslims worldwide say suicide bombings unjustified

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Most Muslims worldwide say suicide bombings unjustified

By Omar Sacirbey

Religion News Service

WASHINGTON (RNS)—George Bush and Osama bin Laden are both losing

the battle for Muslim hearts and minds, a new report shows.

The [Pew Global Attitudes Project](#), a 47-nation survey, found that rising prosperity in the Islamic world has helped slash support for terrorism and bin Laden but has not changed minds about the United States, which most Muslims still view as a military threat.

On the Move

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On the Move

- **Neil Adams** has resigned as pastor of Bethlehem Church in Douglassville.
 - **Zachary Ailshie** to Glen Cove Church in Coleman as pastor.
 - **Charles Ashley** to First Church in Aubrey as minister of music.
 - **Craig Bermender** to Pond Springs Church in Austin as pastor.
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Battling Baptists kissing cousins to peace churches

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Battling Baptists kissing cousins to peace churches

By Jennifer Harris

Word & Way

Baptists are known for being theologically diverse. And that diversity extends to Baptists' relationships with their theological cousins, the Quakers, Mennonites and Brethren—the historical peace churches.

“Although a few Baptists have opted for pacifism on occasion, most fit better into the category known as pacificism, by which is meant they regard war as a horrible option for resolving disputes between nations, but still concede its inevitability on occasion. Sometimes, human beings must pay the supreme price to preserve freedom, eliminate oppression and injustice or end other evils,” wrote Glenn Hinson in a 2004 [Baptist History and Heritage](#) article, “Baptist attitudes toward war and peace since 1914.”

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Churches keep peace within by focusing on troops—not on the war

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Churches keep peace within by focusing on troops—not on the war

By Ken Camp

Managing Editor

Many Christians with deeply held opinions on an increasingly unpopular war find themselves worshipping with fellow believers on the opposite side of the political divide.

Feelings particularly run high in communities near military installations. And some leaders of churches in those areas have adopted an unofficial policy for keeping the peace in their congregations—pray for the troops, and “don’t ask, don’t tell” opinions about the war in Iraq.

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Have Baptists lost their prophetic voice?

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Have Baptists lost their prophetic voice?

By Robert Marus

Associated Baptist Press

Beginning with the ancient Christians martyred by the Roman Empire and running through Thomas Becket and to Dietrich Bonhoeffer and beyond, church leaders often have spoken truth courageously to the secular powers-that-be — regardless of the consequences.

But, in the months leading up to the increasingly unpopular Iraq war, did the United States' powerful conservative evangelical community step away from its responsibility to convey hard truths to the government? The answer, it seems, varies depending on one's views on the war—both past and present.

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“I think (conservative evangelicals) abdicated or relinquished their prophetic role from the beginning” of President Bush’s administration, said Adam Taylor, senior political director for [Sojourners/Call to Renewal](#), a progressive evangelical group that opposed the war from the start.

But Richard Land, the head of the Southern Baptist Convention’s public-

policy agency, said he thinks he and other conservative evangelicals who supported the war vocally were fulfilling their roles properly.

Faith changes little over a lifetime, research reveals

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Faith changes little over a lifetime, research reveals

By Shona Crabtree

Religion News Service

WASHINGTON (RNS)—Michele Dillon and Paul Wink have interviewed scores of septuagenarians about their faith—or lack thereof—and compared their answers to those they gave during their teens and middle age.

What did they discover? People really don't change much over time—religiosity in early adulthood is comparable to that in late adulthood, with a dip in middle age.

Michele Dillon
and Paul Wink
interviewed
scores of
septuagenarians
about their faith
during an in-
depth and long-
term study.
(RNS photo
courtesy of
Wellesley
College)

Sometimes you want to go where everybody knows your name

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Sometimes you want to go where everybody knows your name

By John Hall

Texas Baptist Communications

ELTON—When Randy Rather walks into Tidwell Baptist Church near Greenville, he's knows everyone—their names, their likes and dislikes and their families. And they know nearly everything about Rather, their pastor.

It's this atmosphere that makes people feel welcome in small-membership churches, according to pastors who serve in them. Small numbers of people create an environment where people can foster deep relationships with the entire congregation.

David Keith,
pastor of Carlton
Baptist Church in
Hamilton
Association, visits
with members of
his congregation.
People are drawn
to smaller
churches for the
opportunity to
have deep
relationships with
each person in
the congregation,
leaders of small-
membership
churches note.

“I think one of the things that draws people is there's a chance things can be really personal, whether you're talking about being in a Bible study, choir or worship,” said Dwayne Wheat, pastor of Berea Baptist Church in

Big Spring. "There's an obvious hole when someone's missing."

Cartoon

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"You're giving me a raise, and you want to start a lay-oriented hospital visitation team? OK, who are you guys, and what did you do with my deacons?"

Ministry to orphans still changing lives amid turmoil of Sri Lanka

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About 200 children left orphans by the 2004 tsunami in Sri Lanka are receiving care through Baptist Child & Family Services' overseas division, Children's Emergency Relief International

Ministry to orphans still changing lives amid turmoil of Sri Lanka

By Craig Bird

Baptist Child & Family Services

ATTICALOA, Sri Lanka —Out of sight doesn't mean out of danger for Sri Lanka's orphans. Even though the world's interest in the Indian Ocean island country waned rapidly after the [December 2004 tsunami](#), many survivors of that disaster still are caught in the decades-old civil war that pockmarks the northeastern part of the nation.

The tsunami caused 35,000 deaths in Sri Lanka on Dec. 26, 2004, while the civil war is believed to have resulted in 70,000 casualties in 20 years—including 5,000 in the last 20 months.

