

Baptist schools prepare for case the unthinkable occurs

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University of Mary-Hardin Baylor students participate in an emergency preparedness drill on campus. The exercise, held just two days after the Virginia Tech shootings, had been scheduled and planned months in advance. (Photos by Randy Yandel/UMHB)

Baptist schools prepare 'in case the unthinkable occurs'

By **Ken Camp**

Managing Editor

BELTON—Police cars and fire engines lined the streets on the north side of the [University of Mary-Hardin Baylor](#) campus. Paramedics carried students on stretchers and loaded them into ambulances. But it was just a drill—an emergency response exercise planned long before an armed rampage occurred two days earlier at Virginia Tech.

Bell County's emergency planning committee had scheduled the drill—a simulated hazardous-materials spill on the railroad tracks adjacent to the UMHB campus—months earlier, university spokesperson Carol Woodward said.



UMHB emergency response personnel confer during emergency preparedness drill.

RA boys deliver missions by the ton to Mexico

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Royal
Ambassadors
from First
Baptist
Church in
Graham load
and deliver
9,000
pounds of
food to
orphans in
Piedras
Negras,
Mexico.

RA boys deliver missions by the ton to Mexico

By George Henson

Staff Writer

GRAHAM—Maps of the Apostle Paul’s missionary journeys decorate the walls where Hunter Dooley meets for Royal Ambassadors. If someday a map chronicles Hunter’s missionary travels, it will have to start with the trip he took as a 7-year-old from North Texas to an orphanage in Mexico.

He was among eight RA boys and nine adults who collected, transported and delivered 9,000 pounds of food to feed Mexican orphans. About two dozen boys helped prepare for the trek by keeping First Baptist Church in Graham informed of the need and helping load the trailer, but the smaller number made the trip.

Face death with grace and watchfulness, ethicist urges

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Face death with grace and watchfulness, ethicist urges

By Marv Knox

Editor

ABILENE—Christians must not abandon people who are dying on the doorstep of medicine, ethicist Allen Verhey pleaded.

Instead, the church should engage in “watchfulness” with the seriously ill and dying, Verhey stressed in the Maston Christian Ethics Lectures at Hardin-Simmons University’s Logsdon Seminary in Abilene.

Ethicist Allen Verhey urges churches to treat the seriously ill and dying with grace and to practice “watchfulness.” He delivered the Maston Christian Ethics Lectures at Hardin-Simmons University’s Logsdon Seminary. (Photo by Dave Coffield/HSU)

Baptist Briefs

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Baptist Briefs

Southern Baptists fall short of baptism goal. Southern Baptists failed to meet their goal of baptizing 1 million people in 2006, according to statistics reported by [Southern Baptist Convention](#)-affiliated churches. Baptisms for 2006 instead declined by 1.89 percent—364,826 in 2006 versus 371,850 in 2005. The SBC baptism thrust was launched by immediate past-President Bobby Welch at the outset of his two years in office in June 2004.

International Baptists discuss local-church autonomy. Sixty seven Baptist theologians, leaders and pastors from around the world gathered at a [Baptist World Alliance](#) symposium at the German Baptist Seminary in Elstal, Berlin, to talk about the theology of the church—particularly issues of local-church autonomy. Participants examined the relationship of the local church to the larger Baptist community of associations, national conventions and unions, regional fellowships and the Baptist World Alliance. At the end of the symposium, participants issued a statement concluding, “For Baptists, the local church is wholly church but not the whole church.”

CBF offers church-starter ‘boot camp’ at Truett. The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship’s [New Church Starts Boot Camp](#) will be held July 29-Aug. 3 at Baylor University’s Truett Seminary in Waco. The annual event offers individuals interested in starting churches opportunities for networking, learning about practical resources and assessing their ministerial gifts and calling. American Baptist Churches USA and the Baptist General Convention of Texas also are sponsoring the event. Featured speakers include Tom Johnson, American Baptist new-church

planting coordinator; Andre Punch, BGCT congregational strategists director; and Charles Higgs, BGCT director of western-heritage ministries.

Disaster relief volunteers prepare for the worst, hope for the best

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TBM volunteer ' blue tarp' roofing team prepares a makeshift roof after a 2006 tornado ripped off a building's roof.

Disaster relief volunteers prepare for the worst, hope for the best

By **Barbara Bedrick**

Texas Baptist Communications

ALLAS—Gary Smith missed Hurricane Andrew. He was returning by plane from a mission trip to Kosovo when it hit. But he hasn't missed many severe storms in the past 15 years.

Smith has responded to hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes and tsunamis since he began as a volunteer for Texas Baptist Men 15 years ago. In 2004, he became director of TBM Disaster Relief ministries.



Gary Smith

DOWN HOME: Remember

Margie with love & laughter

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DOWN HOME:

Remember Margie with love & laughter

Thank the Lord, Elijah Peter and Fluretta Ledora Berry decided 14 children were not enough. Who knows how an Oklahoma dryland farm family evaluated the pros and cons of delivering another child into the world—one more mouth to feed/one more hand to harvest crops? Whatever their calculations, on April 3, 1924, the 15th of 16 Berry babies sprang into this world.

I like to imagine little Margie's first cry sounded like laughter—laughter that echoed from her lungs and through the ears of family and friends for more than eight decades.

If you view the old Berry Clan portrait, you'll see a hard-working farm family. Look closely at the adults' faces, and you'll recognize long hours in the sun, droughts and prairie fires, blizzards and hailstorms, the Dust Bowl and the Great Depression. But study the face of the mop-headed girl tucked underneath her daddy's left arm, and you'll see a sparkle in little Margie's eye.

That sparkle gleams in postwar pictures of a young woman in downtown Fort Worth, as well as a newlywed snuggled close to her skinny husband, a mother laughing with her daughters, a grandmother playing with her

grandkids, and even later, an elderly woman snuggled next to her husband of many decades.

EDITORIAL: Let's do something about immigration

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EDITORIAL: Let's do something about immigration

Immigration ranks near the top of the list of great moral issues. If it were easy, somebody would have “fixed” it by now. But no matter how you look at it—either concern for the status quo or care for humanity—you see a challenge that needs to be resolved.

An editorial can't do justice to the complexity of immigration. So, consider this a discussion-starter to accompany the [package of articles on immigration](#) in this paper. Let's structure our thinking in three categories.



Problems

Immigration problems and the passion they stir swirl around three items:

Faith Digest

April 28, 2007

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Faith Digest

Court dismisses suit against Boy Scouts. A federal appeals court has dismissed a lawsuit brought by the American Civil Liberties Union that challenged the U.S. Department of Defense's [support of the Boy Scouts of America](#) and their national Jamboree. In 1999, the ACLU filed suit claiming the "Boy Scouts' policy requiring religious oaths" violated the separation of church and state. The ACLU objected to the the Boy Scouts holding their national Jamboree at Fort A.P. Hill in Virginia every four years because the Scout Oath begins: "On my honor I will do my best to do my duty to God and my country." A lower court had ruled a 1972 law that allowed the Defense Department to support the Scouts was unconstitutional because it

advanced religion on government property, but the Chicago-based 7th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals rejected that ruling.

Only one Brit in 10 attends church. A survey by a British charity indicates more than half of Britain's adults claim to be Christian, but only one in 10 regularly attends weekly church services. [Tearfund](#), a Christian relief and development charity, said its poll of 7,000 men and women over age 16 suggests Christianity remains the dominant faith in Britain, with 53 percent—26.2 million—of the adult population adhering to its beliefs. But those figures from 2006 also represent a sharp decline from the last British census, in 2001, when nearly three-quarters of adults identified themselves as Christian. The poll indicates only 7.6 million adults in a nation of more than 60 million people go to church each month, and only one in 10 attends each week. Two-thirds of the people polled said the only times they had gone to church were for weddings, baptisms and funerals.

Evangelical leader named to religious freedom panel. Former [National Association of Evangelicals](#) President Don Argue has been appointed to the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom. Argue is expected to start the position May 15, replacing Roman Catholic Bishop Ricardo Ramirez of Las Cruces, N.M. Argue is president of Northwest University in Kirkland, Wash., a school affiliated with the Assemblies of God. In 1996, he was appointed to serve on President Clinton's Advisory Committee on Religious Freedom, which led to establishment of the commission. In 1998, Clinton chose Argue to be part of an official delegation of U.S. religious leaders to China. Argue was president of the National Association of Evangelicals from 1995 to 1998, when he resigned to take the university position.

Fingerprint scanner a tool of Antichrist, school employee believes. A

public school employee in St. John the Baptist Parish, La., was suspended for refusing to use a biometric time clock that scans fingerprints, claiming the process violates his religious beliefs. Joe Cook, director of the Louisiana chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union, urged the school board to allow Herman Clayton, a school system electrician and Baptist minister, to continue signing in and out of work, as he did for several months before being suspended without pay in February. Clayton objected to the fingerprint scanning system based on his belief in end-times prophecy. The St. John school district implemented the \$75,000 fingerprint identification system last fall. Employees use it to clock in and out of work by placing a finger in front of a small scanner that recognizes key points on each employee's finger.

Documentary on the power of forgiveness cites Amish example

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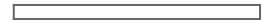
Documentary on the power of forgiveness cites Amish example

By Mary Warner

Religion News Service

ARRISBURG, Pa. (RNS)— Filmmaker Martin Doblmeier, who set out to explore the nature of forgiveness, was almost finished when the news broke about the [Amish school shooting](#) in West Nickel Mines, Pa., last October.

He went to Lancaster County to film a segment on what happened after a gunman invaded the school and killed five girls and then himself. He found an Amish delegation that went to the gunman's widow to show support and forgiveness.



An Amish family arrives to pay respects at the White Oak farm of Chris and Rachel Miller, who lost two daughters when a gunman killed five girls at an Amish school. The Amish community also reached out in compassion to the family of the gunman.
(RNS/Robert Sciarrino/*The Star-Ledger* of Newark, N.J.)

Giuliani leads among evangelicals, Clinton leads among Catholics

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Giuliani leads among evangelicals, Clinton leads among Catholics

By Philip Turner

Religion News Service

WASHINGTON (RNS)—Presidential hopefuls Rudolph Giuliani and Sen. Hillary Clinton hold early leads among key religious voting blocs in the race to win their party nominations, a national survey revealed.

The survey by the Pew Research Center shows religious voters leaning toward more recognizable candidates in the early stages of the race, said John Green, a senior fellow at the [Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life](#).

Anti-immigrant rhetoric nothing new, historians say

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Anti-immigrant rhetoric nothing new, historians say

By Ken Camp

Managing Editor

If American Protestants today have trouble knowing how to accept and assimilate a new wave of immigrants, they at least can take comfort in knowing their forebears wrestled with similar issues.

“Americans have always struggled with immigrants. Non-conformist immigrants like Quakers and Baptists were exiled and sent back to England or the Caribbean by the colonial religious establishment,” [church historian Bill Leonard](#) noted. “Roger Williams (who founded the first Baptist church in the colonies) was an unacceptable immigrant.”

With the Statue of Liberty as his backdrop, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Hart-Cellar Immigration Act on Oct. 3, 1965. The law, which ended restrictive national origin quotas, ushered in an era of mass immigration of unprecedented diversity.

How can churches legally minister to illegal immigrants?

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Elvira Arellano
(center) prays
with other
illegal
immigrants in
the kitchen of
her apartment
in the
Adalberto
United
Methodist
Church in
Chicago, April
15 marked the
8th month that
Mexican-born
Arellano, 32,
has been
fighting a
deportation
order from
inside the
Chicago
church where
she has
imprisoned
herself,
invoking the
ancient
medieval
protection of
sanctuary.
(REUTERS
Photo/John
Gress)

How can churches legally minister to illegal immigrants?

By John Hall

Texas Baptist Communications

When the doorbell rings at many churches, a person in need may be standing in the doorway seeking some food, clothes, counseling or encouragement.

If that individual is an undocumented immigrant, his presence presents legal and ethical issues many congregations do not know how to address, said Krista Gregory, consultant with the [Baptist Immigration Services Network](#), started by the Baptist General Convention of Texas.