

Are some people born to be religious?

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Alistair McGrath,
at podium,
presents his
arguments against
atheism at New
Orleans Baptist
Theological
Seminary. On the
other side was
Daniel Dennett
(right) of Tufts
University. Robert
Stewart, an
associate
professor of
philosophy and
theology (center),
moderated the
Greer-Heard
Point-Counterpoint
Forum.
(RNS/courtesy of
Boyd Guy/New
Orleans Baptist
Theological
Seminary)

Are some people born to be religious?

By Bruce Nolan

Religion News Service

NEW ORLEANS (RNS)—A recent debate at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary was titled “The Future of Atheism,” but the heart of the dialogue explored a related question: Can mankind’s age-old belief in God be explained purely as a stubbornly recurring natural phenomenon—not much different than the common cold?

There is provocative evidence that is so, argued Daniel Dennett, a Tufts University philosopher, atheist and author of [*Breaking the Spell: Religion as a Natural Phenomenon*](#).

When Howard Payne students show love to child, it leads Muslim family to church

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When Howard Payne students show love to child, it leads Muslim family to church

By Kalie Lowrie

Howard Payne University

Howard Payne
University
students (right
to left in the
foreground)
Lindsay
Brimer, Kristen
Griffin, and
team leader
Amy Perkins
help serve
lunch to the
homeless in
Harlem
through the
Salvation Army.
(Photo/provided
by Amy
Perkins)

NEW YORK—Adam, a little boy in Queens, brought his devoutly Muslim family to Sunday school at a Christian church. They never had been interested in Christianity before, but after Adam spent the week with nine Christian students from Brownwood, they were ready to see what it was all about.

Those nine students from [Howard Payne University](#)—along with 40 of their peers—traveled to New York City for spring break to minister to people in the Big Apple.

Churches show lasting benefits from intentional interim ministry, study says

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Churches show lasting benefits from intentional interim ministry, study says

By Ken Camp

Managing Editor

WINSTON-SALEM, N.C.—Churches that go through the intentional interim ministry process show lasting benefits, recent research has demonstrated.

The [Center for Congregational Health](#) examined churches 24 to 36 months after they completed the intentional interim process, paying particular attention to how it affected each church's new pastor.

Novel challenges readers to view gospel through the eyes of Judas

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Novel challenges readers to view gospel through the eyes of Judas

By Francis X. Rocca

Religion News Service

ROME (RNS)—A new book by a colorful British author and an Australian New Testament scholar offers a sympathetic portrayal of Judas as the unwitting betrayer of Christ.

[*The Gospel According to Judas, by Benjamin Iscariot*](#), published simultaneously in eight languages, is a work of fiction presented in the form of Scripture, complete with numbered verses, pages in gold trim and key passages highlighted in red ink.

Jeffrey Archer is
co-author of *The
Gospel
According to
Judas*.
(RNS/courtesy
Goldberg
McDuffie
Communications)

McKissic and Southwestern trustees reach peace agreement

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McKissic and Southwestern trustees reach peace agreement

By Hannah Elliott

Associated Baptist Press

FORT WORTH (ABP)—Arlington pastor Dwight McKissic and his fellow trustees at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary decided to make peace, despite their previous public disagreements.

In a statement issued several days prior to the seminary trustees' spring

meeting, Chairman Van McClain said board leaders and McKissic had “jointly agreed to put past issues behind us.”

Missional leaders needed for churches

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Missional leaders needed for churches

By Barbara Bedrick

Texas Baptist Communications

DALLAS—Vitality of churches in the 21st century depends largely on pioneering and missional leaders, according to Reggie Thomas, director of the Baptist General Convention of Texas congregational leadership team.

Reggie
Thomas,
director of the
BGCT
congregational
leadership
team, points
out the seven
characteristics
of creative
church leaders
in a recent
workshop with
ministers and
church
leaders.

Drawing from Reggie McNeal's book, *A Work of Heart*, Thomas encourages pastors and other church leaders to take seriously and personally the great commission as marching orders for the church. Thomas also stresses leaders be kingdom-conscious, seek to discover where God is at work and join him there.

On the Move

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On the Move

- **Jim Addison** has resigned as pastor of Hillcrest Church in Kemp.
 - **Paul Beard** to Temple Church in New Boston as pastor from Old Union Church in Simms.
 - **Bruce Boling** to Fairview Church in Granbury as youth minister.
 - **Charles Carter** to New Hope Church in Lone Oak as pastor.
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The church in parenthesis

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The church in parenthesis

By Ken Camp

Managing Editor

When pastors leave congregations, their former churches often face what could be termed a punctuation crisis.



Some mark the departure with a period, as the end of a sentence—either for the minister or the congregation. Others approach it with a question mark, asking: “Where do we go from here?” But others see it as a

parenthesis in their church's history—an in-between time when the church can regroup, refocus and retool for its future.

San Angelo bus ministry takes gospel to travelers

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San Angelo bus ministry takes gospel to travelers

SAN ANGELO—At First Baptist Church in San Angelo, bus ministry doesn't mean transporting people to church. It means taking a message of God's love to people who may never pass their way again.

Volunteers from the church minister at the San Angelo Bus Center, board buses to deliver brown paper sacks filled with bottled water, snack crackers, a can of Vienna sausages, a small plastic container of chocolate pudding and tracts in English and Spanish.



Paul Mansfield
boards a bus
in San Angelo
to offer a gift
on behalf of
Jesus Christ to
each
passenger.
(Photo/Jennifer
Wright)

A “love note” is stapled to each bag. One side says: “This is our simple way of saying that God loves you. Let us know if we can be of more assistance.” The other side of the card contains contact information for First Baptist Church.

The bus center ministry began one year ago. Ten buses pass through San Angelo’s bus station every 24 hours—some in the middle of the night.

Churches seeking pastors put plenty of hooks in the water

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Churches seeking pastors put plenty of hooks in the water

By Robert Dilday

Virginia Religious Herald

RICHMOND, Va.—What's in a name?

For churches seeking a new minister, the bottom line is collecting names of candidates—and lots of them. That's not always an easy task, and search committees typically discover it takes a variety of approaches to create a critical mass of potential pastors.

Texas Tidbits

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Texas Tidbits

Buckner honors contributors.

[Buckner International](#) honored top contributors at its annual Founder's Day event April 13. R.C. Buckner Founder's Award recipients include Ruth and Don Buchholz of Dallas as philanthropists of the year and North Park Baptist Church in Abilene for dedicated church service. A donation by the

Buchholz family, members of Park Cities Baptist Church in Dallas, made possible construction of the Buckner Center for Humanitarian Aid. The center, in east Dallas, will serve as the international receiving, processing and sending point for shoes collected through the Shoes for Orphan Souls drive, medicines, food, clothing and other humanitarian aid to orphans and at-risk children and families. North Park Baptist Church was recognized for its collaboration with Buckner to benefit the Buckner Children's Home in Lubbock and the Bruce Ford Community Center in Amarillo. Pastor Louis Johnson also also traveled with church members to Guatemalan and Peruvian orphanages, ministering to orphan children through Buckner. Chevron Phillips Chemical Company also was honored for support of Buckner Children and Family Services of Southeast Texas.

HBU applies to rejoin NCAA.

TOGETHER: Moving forward in a time of transition

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TOGETHER:

Moving forward in a time of transition

April 11, I announced to the Executive Board and to our staff that it is my intention to retire at the end of January 2008. There are several things I will continue to work on as we bring our eight years in this role to a close.

First, I will work to imbed in our organizational culture the gains we have made in serving churches and connecting them to a kingdom-sized vision.



Executive Director
BGCT Executive
Board

Second, I will work with our Baptist institutions and Baptist Student Ministries that are dealing with particular challenges.

Third, I will work to encourage a productive Missions Exchange meeting later this month to help Texas Baptists craft a strategic and collaborative approach to missions.