

# Texas Baptist Forum

October 12, 2007

Posted: 10/12/07

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### **BGCT & the future**

Tim Ahlen's innovative letter about "The Great Commission Initiative" ([Oct. 1](#)) appeared in the same issue as the editorial "If we don't change, this is just Round 1," which demonstrates a common-sense approach that is greatly needed.

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

Letters are welcomed. Send them to [marvknox@baptiststandard.com](mailto:marvknox@baptiststandard.com); 250 words maximum.



*“What’s centrally important is our concern for missions and evangelism, relief and development, human rights and theological reflection.”*

**Neville Callam**

Baptist World Alliance general secretary (RNS)

*“Please pray for me as I continue to meet with persons such as Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton and Bill Richardson. I already have spent time with leaders such as John McCain, Mike Huckabee and Rudy Giuliani. I have spoken on the phone with persons such as Mitt Romney.”*

**Frank Page**

Southern Baptist Convention president (RNS)

*“The KKK is our own terrorist organization. They have murdered, lynched and terrorized thousands of people in this country, or inspired the same. It is disingenuous of us to say that someone in Saudi Arabia ought to do something about their (Muslim) hate groups and then us not do the same.”*

**Jeremy Lucas**

Pastor of St. Timothy’s Episcopal Church in Athens, Ala., on his plans to organize a silent counter-protest to a rally by the Ku Klux Klan (Huntsville Times/RNS)

I served 24 years on the Baptist General Convention of Texas Executive Board staff and five years at the Southern Baptist Convention Home Mission Board. During this time, a major shift took place in the SBC, which preceded an equally dramatic shift in the BGCT.

As a former employee of both conventions, I have been an interested observer, but not participating in the politics. From the beginning, the problems were more about conflicting personalities than fundamental issues. All my friends on both sides believe the word of God is “inerrant.” Some say it without using this word.

The ways people were treated—some ignored, some included and others excluded—caused hurt and a desire to retaliate. No one or no group is happy when they are ignored. This action and reaction has resulted in where we are today, “downsized budget, staff reduction.” Baptists have voted with their money for a long time—and will continue!

Most early leaders of these movements in the SBC and BGCT have retired, and others have gone to heaven. There is no reason to continue the fight! It is time for new visionary leadership to emerge, build trust and cooperation!

The harvest is too great to pray for less.

J.V. Thomas

Rye

Our executive leaders are sending the wrong message to the messengers of our convention. In light of the debacle of last year’s convention, when it appeared that the convention in session did not have a voice on a major issue facing us, the implementation of a budget not yet approved by the

convention tells our messengers once again their votes do not count. I realize (Executive Director) Charles Wade had the rightful authority to reduce the staff as he saw fit, but the timing sends the wrong message to our churches.

A significant reason why we have our budget woes can be traced back to the fact that too many of us feel out of the loop. Many churches are now speaking to us in dollars and cents, and yet their voices are not being heard. If we are going to do more together, we need to do a better job of sending the right messages to our people.

David Lowrie

Canyon

I agree with Marv Knox when he says budget cuts create an atmosphere where “visions for the future are thrown into competition” ([Oct. 1](#)). This struggle was evident when the Executive Board met to create next year’s budget. I was more than a little surprised when the board decided to cut missions and evangelism funds by half a million dollars. No other area of the BGCT budget was cut more.

The No. 1 reason most Texas Baptists give sacrificially to the Cooperative Program is because of the BGCT’s missions and evangelism work. To make the deepest financial cuts in these two areas is to undermine the very reason most Texas Baptists contribute. This, in turn, will discourage future gifts. I fear the BGCT is only exacerbating its financial crisis. For Texas Baptists, missions and evangelism come first, and all other priorities must take second place.

Tim Overton

Louisville, Ky.

### **Presidential 'timing'**

Joy Fenner is something of an icon in Texas Baptist life, and her integrity, leadership and service to our Lord Jesus Christ are beyond reproach. Should she be elected president of the BGCT, I will be honored to support her leadership. However, press coverage surrounding her nomination seems to reflect that one of the key factors in her nomination is that it is "time for a woman to be selected." But is it really?

In view of the fact that church attendance among men lags women by as much as 12 percent and is continuing to decline; and in view of the fact that participation in denominational life by young progressive pastors has declined sharply, precipitating a significant fiscal crisis and layoffs at the BGCT; and in view of the fact that church attendance in the 18- to 30-year-old demographic is decreasing at an astonishing rate, is it really time to elect a respected Baptist icon in order to make a statement about tolerance and diversity?

Or is it time to invite some of our best and brightest cutting-edge pastors to the table of leadership?

Perhaps before we go to Amarillo to cast our votes, we should all pause and prayerfully ask ourselves what time it really is.

Gary Morgan

Waxahachie

### **Pray for troops**

Due to the situation in Iraq, many families suffer the absence of loved ones, who answered the call to military service. I do not wish to point to political differences. I only want to focus on the suffering and agony thousands of families are going through as they await the return of their loved ones.

Please pray until the return of all U.S. and allied troops. May all of us dedicate a specific prayer time and dedicate our prayers to this noble cause.

Please do not break this prayer chain until you see the awaited results. Unite with us in prayer for the needs many families are experiencing for their loved ones!

The intention of this request is to humanize us and allow us to agree in a “common cause” to sympathize and support those with loved ones in Iraq. Can you commit yourself to pray for these families?

We want to know how many Texas Baptists will participate. Please write to us at: Hispanic Baptist Convention of Texas, Office of Hispanic Ministries, 333 North Washington Ave., Dallas 75246-1798. Or contact: [baldemarbj@aol.com](mailto:baldemarbj@aol.com), [rolando.rodriguez@bgct.org](mailto:rolando.rodriguez@bgct.org), [pibdelriotx@hotmail.com](mailto:pibdelriotx@hotmail.com) or [JoAnn.Lira@bgct.org](mailto:JoAnn.Lira@bgct.org).

In the name of many families who have loved ones in Iraq, thank you for your participation in the prayer that can change things, no matter how difficult or impossible they seem.

Baldemar Borrego, president

Hispanic Baptist Convention of Texas

Wichita Falls

**‘Being green’**

Congratulations on your well-balanced articles on environmental issues ([Oct. 1](#)).

Enviro-politics jumps around on all sides of the issues. A well-meaning Christian may consider activism a good way to serve the Lord, only to find defining the issues is important.

For example, when the first Earth Day was celebrated April 22, 1970, the world's greatest concern was global cooling. Today it's global warming. What will another 37 years bring? And why the change of direction?

Seems likely the cooling came because for over 50 years we sent lead into the atmosphere while burning leaded gasoline, and the beginning of a cooling trend was a way God had to teach us that lead in our sky will reflect solar energy away from his earth. Shortly after the catalytic converter was invented, the lead in the atmosphere began diminishing year by year, followed by the warming trend we are now experiencing.

William M. Menger

Huntsville

"It's not easy being green" addressed a subject all Christians need to understand and support.

Contaminating the atmosphere with hydrocarbons and other man-made gases harms mankind, and the economically deprived suffer most. What was not said is that these gasses have only a minor contribution to global warming. The article attempted to link these two scientifically different subjects.

In spite of the political misinformation, global warming is God's way to increase food production in our world! When we were in Africa as part of

program under the International Mission Board, we were distributing a ton of grain each week to very hungry people. God's people need to understand the need to produce food for an ever-growing human population in our world.

Global warming increases plant growth in areas nearer to the poles of the earth by lengthening the agriculture production season in those regions. Carbon dioxide is not a harmful gas. It is a natural gas used by plants much as oxygen is used by animals.

Perhaps Greenland will again be productive as it was in the days of the Vikings.

Bill Osborne

Houston

### **Grace & healing**

I enjoyed your article about the music ministry of Blake Bolerjack ([Sept. 17](#)). We have hosted Blake in our church on three occasions and have been blessed by his musical abilities and heart for following God's call upon his life.

Not only does Blake have a powerful voice, but God has used painful experiences in his life to encourage people who are hurting and let them know of God's grace and healing. I would strongly encourage Texas churches to invite Blake to share with your congregation.

The people of First Baptist Church in Carrollton have been tremendously encouraged and blessed, and I know your church will as well.

Brent Taylor

## Carrollton

News of religion, faith, missions, Bible study and Christian ministry among Baptist churches, in Texas, the BGCT, the nation and around the world.