

# Texas Baptist Forum

November 16, 2007

Posted: 11/16/07

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### Confession & churches

As a minister to youth, I was perplexed by Marv Knox's approval of a forced public confession by two teenagers ([Oct. 15](#)). I would support these young people if they chose to confess their sin publicly. But forced confession is not true confession, just as forced conversion is not true conversion.

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*“Hell is the crazy cousin that Protestants keep locking in the basement. ... A lot of people don't want to talk about hell and engage it because if there is a hell, there's a possibility they are going there.”*

**Greg Stier**

President of Dare 2 Share Ministries,  
an evangelical youth ministry in  
Denver (*The Washington Times/RNS*)

*“There's another church in our community that doesn't have a baptistery, and that pastor and I were talking. He has five folks. I have three. I told him we might want to wait just a little bit, and I've never had to do that.”*

**Brian Harris**

Pastor of Rock Springs Baptist  
Church in Rock Springs, S.C., on the  
drought that has prevented church  
members from filling up their  
baptistery and delayed the baptism  
of new members (*WYFF4.com/RNS*)

*“When I was growing up, denominations were a big deal. I don't see that today. In our church, we have Baptists, Methodists, Jewish people—all kinds of people. I think a lot of those walls have come down.”*

**Joel Osteen**

Houston megachurch pastor and  
author (*USA Today/RNS*)

I also fear many churches would not have reacted as this church did. Instead of humble acceptance of these young people, forced confessions often create communities that reject, despise, humiliate and condemn sinners, even repentant ones.

I find it alarming that while Jesus, in John 8, refused to humiliate the woman, loving her even in her sin (“neither do I condemn you”) and yet still confronted her sin (“go and sin no more”), often our attitude is to condemn as the Pharisees did.

I applaud the church in Knox’s story for reaching out in acceptance and forgiveness, allowing their arms and tears to express God’s love to these two precious youth. Though these youth’s actions were scandalous, these youth were not treated as scandalous.

This leaves us with a penetrating question about the condition of our churches: Are we ready to embrace those who confess such sin? Are we ready to forgive, restoring gently, looking out for ourselves that we too may not be tempted (Galatians 6:1)? The issue is not merely about sinners “owning up” to their sin, but also churches “owning up” to their responsibility to love and unconditionally accept and restore those who confess.

Matt Brown

Burnet

## **Slow greening**

I’m all for going green. Each person can do the things mentioned [in the Oct. 1 edition](#), and it will help some. But industry really needs to be cleaned up to make a big difference.

We have a real problem in that area, because there is no consensus on the best form of alternate energy. Ethanol has major problems, because it puts out as much carbon dioxide and nitrous oxide as oil fuels. If we are to grow massive amounts of corn, we need to feed the poor, not use it as fuel. Cellulose ethanol may be a better option; then we can feed the poor and use the byproducts as fuel. Algae has good possibilities too. Space-based solar energy would probably be the cleanest and most powerful option. There many more possibilities.

Let's not make a fast, rash decision and hurt ourselves in the long run. Let's develop and share clean technology for now and do more research to find the best solution, not a fast, politically correct solution that will show itself as a bad decision in the future.

Jean Whitmore

Okinawa, Japan

### **Pastor searches**

Much debate has gone on about the appropriate manner in which a search committee [looks for a pastor](#). The virtues of search committees secretly infiltrating a church to decide whether or not to steal the pastor away have been extolled and condemned.

However, no one has mentioned looking at resumes sent in to a church by potential pastors who actually are looking for a church. Why go to the trouble of stealing a pastor away from a congregation where he or she is content when there are ministers who actively are seeking a congregation?

As one who has sent out resumes and waited, I would like to encourage search committees to give time to look at the resumes they are sent. I

have been a member of churches that chose pastors based on the resumes they recieved; those churches were very pleased with their decisions.

David Tankersley

Abilene

What do you think? Send letters to Editor Marv Knox by mail: P.O. Box 660267, Dallas 75266-0267; or by e-mail: [marvknox@baptiststandard.com](mailto:marvknox@baptiststandard.com).

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