

Faith Digest

February 15, 2008

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Lost bird helps raise funds for English church. A tiny bird blown across the Atlantic Ocean from North America on winter winds is helping raise funds to repair the roof of an ancient church in the tiny English village where it landed. The white-crowned North American sparrow, a rare visitor to Britain's shores, has become an attraction for "twitchers"—birdwatchers—in the Norfolk village of Cley-next-the-Sea, and a fund-raiser for the settlement's Church of St. Margaret of Antioch. The twitcher tourists turning up in their thousands to view the seven-inch sparrow already have chipped in more than \$6,000 in donations—with possibly more to come—that will be used to mend the east England church's 13th century roof.



A minister walks into a bar ... Chuck Kish, 44, pastor at Bethel Assembly of God in Carlisle, Pa., is launching a program at a local pub to put chaplains in bars. They'll offer help to people who might have ended up there for reasons other than relaxing and socializing. Kish said he and the chaplains he trains will not be there to preach against "the evils of drinking" or to make converts. Chaplains will work in teams, one male and one female. "Some people may think this would be a strange place to find a chaplain. But we need to go where the people are," Kish said.

Mormons name new president. Thomas Monson was elected the 16th president of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Monson, 80,

was the longest-serving member of the church's top leadership body. He succeeds Gordon Hinckley, who died Jan. 27 at age 97, as leader of the world's 13 million Mormons. Monson chose Henry Eyring, 74, as first counselor, the church's No. 2 position. Dieter Uchtdorf, 67, was named second counselor—the third man in the church's triumvirate.

Pope defends Catholic uniqueness. Pope Benedict XVI has defended a controversial Vatican statement on the uniqueness of the Catholic church, saying it would enhance, not derail, ecumenical dialogue. The pope made his remarks in a meeting with members of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, the church's highest doctrinal body. The pope commended the body on a document it published last July, which reaffirms the teaching that the "one Church of Christ ... subsists in the Catholic Church" alone. The document describes non-Catholic Christian churches as defective, and it says Protestant denominations are not even churches "in the proper sense."

Family Place helps mother leave fear behind

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Family Place helps mother leave fear

behind

By Analiz González

Buckner International

MIDLAND—Ambra Riley spent the night in her daughters' room holding her baby tightly in her arms. She put something over the doorknob so she'd know if her husband tried to enter.

Her husband may have stolen her self-esteem and robbed her family of happiness, but he would not take her son, she reasoned.

In Between: New Reformation: Shared ministry

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In Between: New Reformation: Shared ministry

The great Reformation of Luther and Calvin left unfinished business. What the Christian world has not taken seriously is the ministry of all believers, whether lay or ordained, male or female. The Apostle Paul described it as “equipping all believers for ministry” (Ephesians 4:12).

Greg Ogden writes in his book, *The New Reformation: Returning the Ministry to the People of God*: “Serious signs of strain have become visible in traditional American church life. Overworked and stressed pastors and staff worry about large numbers of inactive and passive members who look to the church during times of need, but who often give very little in the form of regular committed service. Fast-growing churches and younger denominations are growing because they have found ways to entrust ministries to nonordained people.”



One Texas pastor agrees and said it this way to me just a few days ago: “I am overwhelmed, while laypersons in my church are totally underwhelmed and unchallenged because they see their primary task is to pay and pray for the staff to do everything. I was even told, ‘Preacher, you’re trained and paid, so it is up to you to get ministry done the best way you can.’”

In between Charles Wade’s and the BGCT’s next executive director, I have the wonderful privilege of listening to the concerns, questions and prayer requests of Texas Baptists—both inside and outside the convention staff. I plan to share some of those relevant matters with you during these next few weeks.

Texas Baptist Forum

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Texas Baptist Forum

Hypocrites everywhere

You do not have to do a survey, but have you noticed how many hypocrites we have at ballgames, malls, movie theaters, driving down the highways, lecturing/teaching in our schools, colleges, universities, seminaries and the Congress?

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

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



“What do I do? Do I go up to them and say, ‘Can I see your documents before I give you free spaghetti?’ It negates Matthew 25, where Jesus says, ‘What you do for the least of these, you do for me.’”

Dave Lewis

Pastor in Shawnee, Okla., about a new state law, which makes it a felony to knowingly shelter or transport illegal immigrants
(*Presbyterian Outlook/RNS*)

“In spite of their best efforts to steer people to another candidate ... they failed. Why? Because the people said: ‘I don’t care who you think I should vote for. I’m going to vote for who I want to vote for.’”

Richard Cizik

Vice president for governmental affairs of the National Association of Evangelicals, speaking about religious right leaders’ political influence (RNS)

“Far too often, religious services in the USA are of the adults, by the adults and for the adults. And don’t think young people aren’t noticing.”

Stephen Prothero

Chair of Boston University’s religion department (USA Today/RNS)

You bet, we have hypocrites in the church—I'm probably one of them.

But I am thankful I have a church that gives me the opportunity to continue “working out” my salvation.

Love leaves no room for ‘us and them,’ Dallas pastor says

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Love leaves no room for ‘us and them,’ Dallas pastor says

By Ken Camp

Managing Editor

ATLANTA—Peace and reconciliation require people to move beyond categories of “us and them” that always become “us versus them,” said George Mason, pastor of Wilshire Baptist Church in Dallas.

Mason spoke at a prophetic preaching conference held as a part of the New Baptist Covenant celebration in Atlanta.

Sexual exploitation alive in America; churches can end it

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Sexual exploitation alive in America; churches can end it

By Hannah Elliott

Associated Baptist Press

ATLANTA (ABP)—Many church-goers know human trafficking and sexual exploitation are global issues. But more than 200,000 children in the United States have become “sex commodities” as well, Baptist social workers say.

Ellyn Waller and Brenda Troy led a discussion about exploitive sex at the New Baptist Covenant meeting in Atlanta—a city with the nation’s second-highest rate of human trafficking, they noted.

Team-based ministry changing church culture

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Team-based ministry changing church culture

By Jennifer Harris

Word & Way

Organization makes a huge impact on the effectiveness of a church's ministries, consultants agree. The way leadership groups are organized—in committees or teams—may mean the difference between short-term obligation and long-term service.

Deserved or not, committees often have a negative connotation, said Don Simmons, owner of Creative Potential Consulting and Training.

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| Some churches are shifting from "committee" terminology to a "team" concept. |
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“The terminology and methodology is borrowed from government and corporate cultures,” Simmons said. “Committees have a reputation for long, boring meetings where little is accomplished and for structures that rarely take a person’s giftedness and passion into account, but rather their availability and inability to say ‘no.’”

Texas Tidbits

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Texas Tidbits

BGCT launches Spanish website. The Baptist General Convention of Texas has launched a Spanish website to provide resources for Spanish-speaking congregations. The site, www.bgct.org/espanol, pulls together the convention’s Spanish resources for churches and makes new materials available to them. Many of the items have been written by Hispanic Texas Baptist leaders.

CERI staffer will shape national policies in Moldova. Jon Meyer of [Children’s Emergency Relief International](http://www.ceri.org) begins a two-year stint Feb. 20 as senior consultant to the newly created Ministry of Social Protection in Moldova. He will help the government develop a national strategy and draft policies related to the care of displaced children. He also will teach social work in the government university. CERI—the international arm of Baptist

Child & Family Services—began work in Moldova with summer camps for orphans in 1999. Later efforts included Christmas camps, social work and medical support for orphanages, and a drive to provide winter boots for orphans.



Buckner sponsors Global Missions Conference. Buckner International will sponsor its “Go.Be.Do.” Global Missions Conference from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. April 12 at Park Cities Baptist Church in Dallas. The conference will feature international Buckner staff and experienced missionaries from eight countries. Participants can learn more about the needs of orphans in each country and discover opportunities available to transform lives through missions during specialized breakout sessions. The \$20 per person registration fee includes lunch and snacks. Maximum cost per church is \$200, and students can register for \$5. To register for the one-day conference, go to www.buckner.org/gobedoconference or call (800) 442-4800 ext. 8061.

CBF council approves budget, reports revenue shortfalls at February meeting

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By Hannah Elliott

Associated Baptist Press

ATLANTA (ABP)—Leaders of the [Cooperative Baptist Fellowship](#) approved a \$16.5 million budget for the 2008-2009 fiscal year and heard of budget shortfalls during the CBF Coordinating Council's February meeting in Decatur, Ga.

The council's finance committee reported that, as of the end of January 2008, CBF's revenue had reached only 89 percent of its projected 2007-2008 budget. Meanwhile, expenditures by the end of calendar year 2007 reached 91 percent of the projected budget. January expenditures are still being processed, said CBF spokesman Lance Wallace, although the term's total expenditures will probably parallel last year's figures.



Connie McNeill, right, the Fellowship's coordinator of administration, talks with Coordinating Council members Al Butler, center, and Ann Miller, left, about plans for CBF's new office space at Mercer.

BaptistWay Bible Series for February 24: The Worst and Best of Times

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BaptistWay Bible Series for February 24

The Worst and Best of Times

• Mark 14:61b-64; 15:9-24, 37-41; 16:1-8

[By Andrew Daugherty](#)

Human Rights Watch blasts U.S. on Kenya violence

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Human Rights Watch blasts U.S. on Kenya violence

By Greg Trotter

Religion News Service

WASHINGTON (RNS)—As blood continues to be spilled on Kenyan streets in fierce protest of the disputed presidential elections in late December, the head of Human Rights Watch demanded that the U.S. government take more responsibility for that violence.

“It’s easy to see why every two-bit tyrant around the world thinks he may qualify as a democrat,” Kenneth Roth said in releasing the group’s annual report on human rights. “Kenya is the latest example of that.”

Mothers hold their children as they wait for distribution of food aid at a church in Nairobi's Kibera slum. U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon urged Kenyans to stop violence that has killed at least 850 people and left more than 300,000 as refugees. (REUTERS/Photo by Zohra Bensemra)

Bible Studies for Life Series for February 24: The model

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Bible Studies for Life Series for February 24

The model

- John 4:4-10, 13-18, 24-26

By Steve Dominy