

For Casting Crowns, performing and recording music is just a side job

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Mark Hall, center, is the frontman for the Christian group Casting Crowns and a youth pastor at Eagle's Landing First Baptist Church in McDonough, Ga. All seven members of the band also work in full-time youth ministry. (RNS photo courtesy Song BMG Music Entertainment)

For Casting Crowns, performing and recording music is just a side job

By Adelle M. Banks

Religion News Service

FAIRFAX, Va.—On one night, youth pastor Mark Hall puts plans together for his Wednesday night youth service at Eagle's Landing First Baptist Church in the Atlanta suburb of McDonough, Ga. The next night, Hall is on stage in the Washington suburbs, fronting his Grammy-nominated band, Casting Crowns.

For Hall and other members of his group—all of them involved in youth ministry in Atlanta-area churches—middle-school and high-school students are top priority. It just happens they end up reaching them both on stage and off stage.

New book examines life and contributions of "Daddy King"

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New book examines life and contributions of 'Daddy King'

By Greg Trotter

Religion News Service

NEWFIELD, N.Y. (RNS)—Few dispute that Martin Luther King Jr.'s courageous leadership in the civil rights movement of the 1960s forever changed the course of American history. But even before he led the historic Montgomery bus boycott and other nonviolent protests, another King was pounding the pulpit and the pavement for social justice—his father, Martin Luther King Sr., known as “Daddy King” to his family, friends and members of his church.

Gurdon Brewster has decided to make Daddy King's story better known. Brewster's memoir, [*No Turning Back: My Summer With Daddy King*](#), recounts the months in 1961 he spent with the elder King and his wife, Alberta, in Atlanta.

Gurdon
Brewster
welcomes
Martin
Luther
King Sr.
to Cornell
University
in 1979.
Brewster
is the
author of
No
Turning
Back: My
Summer
With
Daddy
King.
(RNS
photo
courtesy
of Gurdon
Brewster)

VeggieTales creator's self-image: More Mr. Rogers than van Gogh

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The
VeggieTales
series' second
feature-length
film is *The
Pirates Who
Don't Do
Anything*.
(RNS photo
courtesy of
Big Idea)

VeggieTales creator's self-image: More Mr. Rogers than van Gogh

By Andrea Useem

Religion News Service

WASHINGTON (RNS)—*VeggieTales* co-creator Phil Vischer views the new feature-length movie, *The Pirates Who Don't Do Anything*, like a biblical parable.

It teaches about the Kingdom of God through an entertaining story—in this case, the tale of three bumbling vegetable friends who must band together and overcome their fears to save their friends.

Explore the Bible Series for February 10: Do you obey in faith?

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Explore the Bible Series for February 10

Do you obey in faith?

- Genesis 22:1-18

[By Donald Raney](#)

First Baptist Church, Petersburg

Years ago, a man was walking through the desert in Nevada when he came across an old abandoned store with a pump to a water well next to it. Upon approaching the pump, he noticed there was a note attached to the handle.

On the Move

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On the Move

- **David Gruhn** to Trinity Church in Watseka, Ill., as pastor from First Church in Palacios.
- **Matt Homeyer** to Fellowship Church in Marble Falls as pastor.
- **James Lane** to First Church in Markham as pastor.

Blogger Burleson resigns from International Mission Board

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Blogger Burleson resigns

from International Mission Board

By Hannah Elliott

Associated Baptist Press

GAINESVILLE, Fla. (ABP)— Wade Burleson, the pastor/blogger who railed against what he saw as an excessive narrowing of parameters within the Southern Baptist Convention, has resigned from his position as a trustee of the SBC's International Mission Board.

Burleson, pastor of Emmanuel Baptist Church in Enid, Okla., said he also plans to write a book "to tell everything that has not been told" about recent disputes in the denomination. He said he hopes to have it published before the SBC annual meeting in June.

RIGHT or WRONG? Win or reconcile?

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RIGHT or WRONG? Win or reconcile?

Years ago, I was taught church members should be able to work out their differences with patience and respect. Now, most Christians

seem to prefer fighting and winning to reconciliation. This is about to drive me out of my church. What can I do to “hang in there” and make a difference?

**Evangelism requires
commitmentâ€”even if it means
holding church under a tree**

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Youth
who
have
never
fit in at
church
are
drawn
to Ron
Evans'
Church
Under
the
Tree in
a Plano
park.

Evangelism requires commitment- even if it means holding church under a tree

By Loni Fancher

Texas Baptist Communications

ROCKWALL—Commitment is the key to a fruitful ministry, said Ron Evans. He should know. He's persistently followed God's calling to break through barriers and reach a group of disenfranchised young people as pastor of Plano's Church Under the Tree.

During Super Summer in 2006, the youth pastor of Brown Street Baptist

Fellowship in Wylie felt God calling him to reach out to unchurched and disenfranchised youth.

Around the State

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Posted: 1/30/08

Around the State

- **East Texas Baptist University** will hold “shadow days” Feb. 7-8 for high school seniors and college transfer students. The event offers visiting students an opportunity to attend classes, spend the night in the dorm, socialize with current students and meet professors. Preregistration is required, and a \$15 fee must be paid. For more information, call (800) 804-3828.
- **The baseball team** of East Texas Baptist University will host a canned food drive Feb. 8 when it opens the season with a doubleheader against Jarvis Christian College at 4 p.m. All fans are asked to bring a minimum of two cans as their admission to the games. The drive will benefit local families.
- **Dallas Baptist University** will hold a preview for prospective students Feb. 9 from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Included is breakfast with current students, a Patriot rally and interaction with faculty members. Students also will tour the campus. Parents will learn about financial aid, campus life, parent services and the application process. A second preview is slated

for April 26. For more information, call (214) 333-5360.

- **The University of Mary Hardin-Baylor's McLane Lecture** will be held Feb. 14 at 11 a.m. in the Lord Conference Center. Kirbyjon Caldwell, pastor of Windsor Village United Methodist Church in Houston, will be the guest speaker. Caldwell started the church in 1982 with 25 members, and today the 14,000-member church is the largest United Methodist church in the nation. The lecture is free and open to the public.

2nd Opinion: Political truth: Rhetoric or conduct?

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2nd Opinion: Political truth: Rhetoric or conduct?

By Randall Balmer

Eight years ago, when George W. Bush declared Jesus was his favorite philosopher, suppose someone had asked a follow-up question: "Mr. Bush, Jesus invited his followers to love their enemies and to turn the other cheek. How will that guide your foreign policy, especially in the event, say, of an attack on the United States?"

Or: "Gov. Bush, your favorite philosopher expressed concern for the tiniest

sparrow. How will that sentiment be reflected in your administration's environmental policies?"

Or: "Jesus called his followers to care for 'the least of these.' How does that teaching inform your views on tax policy or welfare reform?"

DOWN HOME: Talk about your gridiron miracle

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DOWN HOME: Talk about your gridiron miracle

This season, the National Football League once again demonstrated an old adage passed down from generation unto generation: Football will break your heart.

Unless, inexplicably, you are a New England Patriots' fan (like my son-in-law, Aaron), or, even more incomprehensibly, you favor the New York Giants, you got your heart broken weeks—maybe even months—ago.

Well, that's not exactly true.

I haven't polled Houston Texans fans to see if they've suffered like all of us

who root, root, root for the Dallas Cowboys. We were disturbed when the Cowboys lost their Mojo in December. And we were crushed when the despised Giants knocked them out of contention for the Super Bowl.

EDITORIAL: The BGCT's opportunity for success

February 1, 2008

Posted: 1/30/08

EDITORIAL: The BGCT's opportunity for success

Like few decisions in the past 100 years, the Baptist General Convention of Texas Executive Board must make a correct call on the election of its next executive director.



Although the BGCT is composed of about 5,500 churches, more than 100 associations, 27 agencies and institutions, and more than a million Baptist

Christians, the executive director wields unparalleled influence in shaping the overall direction of the convention. That's because the Executive Board stands at the visible "center" of the BGCT. It supplies the connective tissue between Texas Baptist churches and the institutions and convention ministries. It provides most of the conventionwide promotion, receives and allocates the BGCT's Cooperative Program unified budget, and helps coordinate overall strategy and tactics for making an impact on our state, nation and the world with the gospel.

During the last few years, for a variety of reasons, the BGCT has been in a funk. We have lost churches to a competing state convention. More tragically, churches have distanced themselves from our convention because of apathy and a sense the convention is irrelevant to them and to their ministries. Cooperative Program receipts have suffered. The Executive Board has endured rounds of staff cutbacks and reorganizations. Support for institutions has not been satisfactory. Attendance at vital events, such as the BGCT annual meeting, has been disappointing. Factions have pointed fingers of blame at each other. Morale has suffered, both in the Baptist Building and across the state.

The next person to occupy the executive director's chair—which became vacant Feb. 1—must restore a spirit of purpose and unity to our beloved BGCT. This will be more difficult and demanding than we can imagine. For one thing, the Cooperative Program is expected to decline, most likely necessitating further staff cutbacks and possibly curtailing institutional and missions/ministry support. These moves will bruise morale. For another, some aspects of factionalism have had time to set up and harden, so bringing our disparate constituencies back together will require patience, persistence and sacrificial, selfless integrity. The person who steps into that breach will feel as if he's being pressured and questioned from every direction, an excruciatingly lonely assignment.