

Religion writers name evangelicals in election as last year's top story

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Religion writers name evangelicals in election as last year's top story

By Adelle M. Banks

Religion News Service

WASHINGTON (RNS)—The nation's religion writers considered political grappling of evangelicals for a GOP presidential candidate the top religion story of 2007.

Members of the Religion Newswriters Association named their Top 10 list of religion stories for the year.

Book reviews

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Book reviews

Flawed Families of the Bible: How God's Grace Works through Imperfect Relationships **by David E. Garland and Diana R. Garland**
(Brazos Press)

We frequently hear discouraging statistics about family life in the United States—failed marriages, sexual abuse, violence and chaos. We don't frequently hear reminders that the Bible, especially the Old Testament, brims with stories of the same problems. Some of them make today's headlines look pale in comparison.

Diana and David Garland have provided a book that helps us face these stories and the issues they raise. Although the book makes a lot of guesses about what was going on in the minds of the biblical figures, it shines a reliable spotlight into dark corners that we need to see. The chapter on David and Bathsheba especially is eye-opening.



What are you reading that other Texas Baptists would find helpful? Send suggestions and reviews to books@baptiststandard.com.

When reading through the whole Bible for the first time, or for the first

time in years, people often ask, “Why in the world is that in there?!” Now we have a wise guidebook to explain why and to show “how God’s grace works through imperfect relationships.”

EDITORIAL: BGCT in ’08: Purpose over pander

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EDITORIAL: BGCT in ’08: Purpose over pander

This will be a pivotal year for the Baptist General Convention of Texas. The outcome will turn on several factors, but none more important than this: We must focus on our historic purpose, not pander to self-interest.

The BGCT Constitution defines the “nature” of the convention straight-up: “This convention is and always shall remain, only and solely a medium through which Baptist churches shall work harmoniously in cooperation with each other, promoting the work and objects set forth in this constitution.” And what are those “objects”? “To awake and stimulate among the churches evangelism, missions, Christian education and benevolent work and enterprises; to cultivate a closer cooperation among the churches and promote harmony of feeling and concert of action in advancing all the interests of the Redeemer’s Kingdom.”



For generations, Baptists have set aside ego, turf and even minor theological differences to cooperate. We have done so based on this truth: We can do more together than we can alone. But I'm not sure we still believe it.

That's because we mirror society, particularly the me-first Baby Boom generation, which idolizes the individual. From politics, to advertising, to education, to about everything in-between, it's all about what "I" wants.

TOGETHER: Gospel means evangelism & ministry

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TOGETHER: Gospel means evangelism & ministry

I have sounded the twin notes of evangelism and ministry throughout my time as your executive director. I have done this because I am convinced both notes must be played in harmony if our churches are to have a full and healthy response to Christ's call to "follow me." The spiritual idea that drives me is that we have been called to be a Jesus kind of people and to build Jesus kind of churches.

Jesus came preaching the good news of God: “The time has come. The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news” (Mark 1:15). Sin has broken everyone and separated us from God, but God loves us so much that he doesn’t want to spend eternity without us. He sent Jesus into the world to make sure we knew that. And the followers of Christ respond to that love and salvation by reaching out to others.


Executive Director BGCT Executive Board

Jesus also came demonstrating the heart of God and the will of God to the world. He spent time with the poor as well as the rich. He called those who have much to be generous in their attitudes and stewardship toward the needy. He demonstrated that people who love God also will love the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick and the prisoners (Matthew 4:23-24; 25:37-40; Luke 4:18-19).

These are not two gospels. There is only one gospel, and Jesus embodied all of it.

DOWNHOME: Not-so-patiently

learning to wait

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DOWNHOME:

Not-so-patiently learning to wait

If you pray for patience, God might move you to a Texas neighborhood with plenty of trees.

(By the way, never pray for patience or wisdom unless you really mean it. Those are wonderful virtues, but their acquisition comes with a steep, steep price.)

Joanna and I moved to our home in Coppell, in far northwest Dallas County, not quite a year and a half ago. Our girls both had graduated from high school, and Jo and I realized we could trim our commute time without uprooting our progeny. So, we moved.

From a practical standpoint, we were thrilled with the shorter driving times each day. From an emotional standpoint, we reveled in the hominess of our house. And from an almost spiritual standpoint, we adored all the trees.

Storylist for 1/07/08 issue

January 4, 2008

Storylist for week of 1/07/08

TAKE ME TO: [Top Story](#) | [Texas](#) | [Opinion](#) | [Baptists](#) | [Faith & Culture](#) | [Book Reviews](#) | [Classifieds](#) | [Departments](#) | [Bible Study](#)



- [Kenya violence affects Wayland students](#)
- [Christians killed, churches burned in India](#)



- [Time to revamp discipleship methods?](#)



- [Families needed to adopt Ethiopian orphans](#)
- [Habitual Sin: Pastor's experience shows Christians can find freedom](#)
- [On the move](#)
- [Around the State](#)
- [Texas Tidbits](#)

Time to Revamp Discipleship Methods?

- [Study finds limits to Willow Creek's success model](#)

- [*Raising the bar for membership*](#)
- [*Time to revamp discipleship methods?*](#)



- [*Volunteer teachers needed in China*](#)
- [*Baptist Briefs*](#)



- [*College students' spiritual interests increase; worship attendance drops*](#)
- [*Mayors' report says cities seeing more emergency food requests*](#)
- [*Religion writers name evangelicals in election as last year's top story*](#)
- [*2007 a quiet year, but signs of change in the air*](#)
- [*Prayer heals honest Brit's legs but cannot cure bureaucracy with no 'miracle' button*](#)
- [*High-tech audio Bibles bring Scriptures to life, users say*](#)
- [*Faith Digest*](#)



- [*Book reviews*](#)



- [*Classified Ads*](#)
- [*Cartoon*](#)
- [*On the move*](#)

- [*Around the State*](#)



- [*EDITORIAL: BGCT in '08: Purpose over pander*](#)
- [*DOWNHOME: Not-so-patiently learning to wait*](#)
- [*TOGETHER: Gospel means evangelism & ministry*](#)
- [*RIGHT or WRONG? A spouse's etiquette*](#)
- [*Texas Baptist Forum*](#)



- [*BaptistWay Bible Series for January 6: When cleanliness is not next to godliness*](#)
- [*Bible Studies for Life Series for January 6: Breakthrough in focus*](#)
- [*Bible Studies for Life Series for January 13: Breakthrough in Forgiveness*](#)
- [*Explore the Bible Series for January 13: God allows us to choose*](#)

Previously posted

- [*Christians killed, churches burned in India*](#)
- [*Kenya violence affects Wayland students*](#)
- [*Former Valley Baptist Missions/Education Center president arrested*](#)
- [*Buckner postpones Kenya trips due to political unrest*](#)
- [*New Baptist Covenant, Huckabee rank as top stories in 07.*](#)

journalists say

- Bird-eye view of Valley left indelible impression on long-tenured pastor
- ETBU dormitory furnishings find new home, meet multiple needs
- Hispanic social conservatives may leave GOP over immigration stance
- Florida sanctuary gutted by early-morning fire before Christmas
- Daehnert elected interim BGCT executive director
- Agency gives party for foster families who give year-round
- Foster youth create own Christmas traditions
- Novelist Grisham joins New Baptist Covenant speakers lineup
- Missouri leader who warned of Islamic takeover hired to aid world-mission effort
- CBF to lease building from Mercer
- Baptist outreach defuses Ebola fear in western Uganda
- Blogging pastor lauded for defending fired female seminary professor
- Board voting on Daehnert as interim executive director
- Board to vote on interim executive director
- TBM seeks coats for children in North Korea
- Board to vote on interim executive director
- Missouri Baptist rift widens when leaders restrict funding for church

[starts](#)

- [Huckabee's surge in polls brings new media attention, scrutiny](#)
 - [Seven tips for the 2007 tax-filing season](#)
 - [End of CBF/ABC partnership leaves future of medical/retirement benefits in doubt](#)
 - [Former atheist shapes God-centered program in Moldova](#)
 - [Executive Board may vote on short-term interim executive director](#)
 - [See articles from the previous 12/17/07 issue here.](#)
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RIGHT or WRONG? A spouse's etiquette

January 4, 2008

Posted: 1/04/08

RIGHT or WRONG? A spouse's etiquette

My husband and I said the traditional vows in our wedding a few months ago. The richer/poorer and sickness/health parts have been easy enough to deal with. However, my husband's table manners and social etiquette have deteriorated since we dated. I

don't want these things to become a wedge. What can I do?

Valley Funds Scandal coverage

January 4, 2008

Posted 11/17/06

Valley Funds Scandal coverage

The full investigation report is [available here](#) as a pdf document.

Most recent articles:

- [Former Valley Baptist Missions/Education Center president arrested](#)
- [Former pastor returns money to congregation: church agrees to give funds to BGCT](#)
- [BGCT launches internal audit regarding more alleged improprieties in the Valley](#)
- [Official confirms church-starting fund probe in U.S. Attorney's Office](#)
- [No lawsuits planned; too costly & complex, lawyer suggests](#)
 - [BGCT implements responses to church-starting scandal](#)
- [Executive Board to BGCT messengers: You're in charge](#)
- [Former BGCT church-starting leader asserts race a factor in Valley probe](#)
- [Bloggers to ask Executive Board to protect voting rights of messengers](#)
- [Federal authorities receive Valley report](#)
- [Pieces coming together for McAllen church](#)
 - [Wade to release Valley probe to law-enforcement officials](#)
 - [Wade still has support despite anger, sadness at scandal](#)

Convention action on the funds scandal

- [Moving On: Board pre-empted' BGCT by recommending reforms](#)
- [Trust in God in turbulent times, president tells BGCT](#)
- [Church starting policies designed to ensure accountability](#)
- [Steps already taken to implement recommendations](#)
- [Restoration of trust is vital, BGCT leaders agree](#)
- [EDITORIAL: Churches next to 'vote' on BGCT future](#)
- [Executive Board votes to explore criminal charges, recovery of Valley funds](#)

Previous related articles:

- [Pattern of exaggeration repeated in Mexico, observers say](#)
 - [Executive Board sets second called meeting to respond to investigation](#)
 - [Evidence found of misuse of Valley funds](#)
 - [Investigation team outlines preventative steps](#)
 - [Brief excerpts from the report](#)
 - [Otto Arango's earnings claims disputed by directors of missions](#)
 - [BGCT faces challenges leaders say](#)
 - [EDITORIAL: Executive Board must rise to the occasion](#)
 - Charles Wade posted an early response to the report [here](#).
- Early progress of the Valley funds probe**
- [Valley investigation could cost \\$150,000](#)
 - [Called board meeting focuses on Valley](#)
 - [Executive Board endorses ongoing probe in Rio Grande Valley](#)
 - [Attorney hired to guide church-starting fund investigation](#)
 - [BGCT launches probe of church-planting funds in the Valley](#)

News of religion, faith, missions, Bible study and Christian ministry among Texas Baptist churches, in the BGCT, the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) and around the world.

Former Valley Baptist Missions/Education Center president arrested

January 4, 2008

Posted: 1/03/07

Former Valley Baptist Missions/Education Center president arrested

By John Hall

Texas Baptist Communications

HARLINGEN - Former Valley Baptist Missions/Education Center president Pat Graham was arrested Dec. 21 on theft of property charges.

Valley Baptist Missions/Education Center discovered financial irregularities in its regular financial audit shortly before Graham resigned in June, said Othal Brand, chairman of the center's board of trustees.

Buckner postpones Kenya trips due to political unrest

January 4, 2008

Posted: 1/03/07

Buckner postpones Kenya trips due to political unrest

By John Hall

Texas Baptist Communications

DALLAS—Buckner International has postponed two mission trips to Kenya in light of political unrest, but the agency has no plans to “back out” of ministry there.

In the wake of a disputed presidential election, violence has broken out in parts of the country. Tens of thousands of people have fled their homes. About 300 people have been killed, including 35 people who were burned to death in an Eldoret church.

Bird-eye view of Valley left indelible impression on long-tenured pastor

January 4, 2008

Posted: 12/28/07

Bird-eye view of Valley left indelible impression on long-tenured pastor

RIO HONDO—Considering the median tenure for Southern Baptist pastors at any given church is 4.2 years, Gene Horton's 40-years-and-counting at First Baptist Church in Rio Hondo places him among the ranks of less than one percent of his peers.

Horton, who has been in the ministry 55 years, credits his lengthy of service to "God's keeping power."

Gene Horton

Frances Knight, who has been a Sunday school teacher at the Rio Hondo church for 38 years, believes the secret of her pastor's success is simple.

"God has kept him steady because he is a man of prayer, and he faithfully preaches the gospel of salvation," she said.

Explore the Bible Series for January 13: God allows us to choose

January 4, 2008

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Explore the Bible Series for January 13

God allows us to choose

• *Genesis 12:1-9; 13:8-13*

By Donald Raney

First Baptist Church, Petersburg

Choices. We all make hundreds of them every day. Many concern trivial issues and almost are made unconsciously. Others involve decisions that affect the course of our life as well as that of our family.