

The Spirit in Stone

October 12, 2007

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The
sanctuary
of River
Bend
Church in
Austin.
(Photo by
Tim
Blonkvist)

The Spirit in Stone

By Greg Warner

Associated Baptist Press

AUSTIN (ABP)—If your sanctuary could speak, what would it say? The truth is, it does speak—every day, some experts note.

Whether a towering neo-Gothic steeple that knifes the suburban sky or a one-room clapboard chapel nestled in the woods, every church structure carries a message to the watching world.

“It’s God’s calling card—it’s all he has,” said Texas architect Tim Blonkvist. “People are going to make an evaluation based on what they can see before they hear anything.”



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Historic sanctuaries: To be or not to be?

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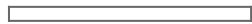
Historic sanctuaries:

To be or not to be?

By John Hall

Texas Baptist Communications

DALLAS—When maintaining a sanctuary with a long history, congregations must look long into the future, according to Keith Crouch, Baptist General Convention of Texas church architecture director.



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Around the State

October 12, 2007

Baptist Child & Family Services recently formally dedicated its South Texas Center, located in San Antonio.

Baptist Briefs

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Baptist Briefs

Christian bookstore manager in Gaza murdered. The Palestinian Baptist manager of a Christian book store in the Gaza Strip has been murdered. Authorities reportedly found the body of Rami Ayyad Oct. 7 in Gaza City. He died from a gunshot wound to the head and numerous stab wounds, according to officials from Open Doors, an agency that supports persecuted Christians worldwide. He had been missing since Oct. 6, when he phoned his family to say he had been kidnapped. Ayyad managed the Palestinian Bible Society bookshop and had received several death threats from people angry about the store. The bookshop is Gaza's only Christian bookstore, according to the Baptist World Alliance. It shares a common building with a library and community development center, the base for one of the largest relief agencies in the Gaza Strip. Police have yet to identify suspects in the murder.

Corts will coordinate education initiative. Thomas Corts, executive director of the International Association of Baptist Colleges and Universities and former president of Samford University, has been named to a new position related to President Bush's international education initiatives. Corts, 65, will be responsible for coordinating U.S. foreign aid efforts to support education around the world. The initiatives include a five-year plan to provide education to 4 million children in six countries—Ethiopia, Ghana, Honduras, Liberia, Mali and Yemen. The foreign aid education programs are administered through the U.S. Agency for International Development and coordinated with the State Department, the Department of Education and other agencies.

2008 BGCT Operating Budget Explanation

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2008 BGCT Operating Budget Explanation

I. The BGCT Operating Budget presentation has been reconstructed over the past two years in order to better reflect the Cooperative Program operating funds and to remove designated funds such as Mary Hill Davis Offering and North American Mission Board monies from the Operating

Budget. This new presentation will enhance reporting and accountability regarding the various funding sources.

II. There are four categories of BGCT income:

1. Cooperative Program


2. Investment Earnings

3. Fees/Revenues (used to defray costs of specific events or ministries)

BGCT budget proposal reflects change in reporting

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BGCT budget proposal reflects change in reporting

By Ken Camp

Managing Editor

The proposed 2008 Baptist General Convention of Texas operating budget looks different than in past years—and not just because the total

is smaller.

The \$50,126,400 recommended operating budget includes \$43.3 million in anticipated Cooperative Program receipts and \$6.8 million from investment earnings—but not any funds made available through the Mary Hill Davis Offering for Texas Missions, the Southern Baptist Convention’s North American Mission Board or fees received to defray the cost of specific events or ministries. Those three categories totaled 896,500 in the 2007 budget.

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Among first missionaries in Burma, Baptists now helping refugees in U.S.

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Karen refugees leaving Burma for
resettlement in the United States.
(Photo/www.karenkonnection.org)

Among first missionaries in Burma, Baptists now helping refugees in U.S.

By Hannah Elliott

Associated Baptist Press

NEW YORK (ABP)—If any group in the United States has a reason to care about the people of Burma, it is Baptists.

That's what Duane Binkley, a Baptist missionary to the region, said Oct. 4, the day the Burmese government admitted it has arrested more than 2,000 people since the start of pro-democracy demonstrations in the country now officially known as Myanmar.

Cartoon

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

DOWN HOME: Procrastination or patience?

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DOWN HOME: Procrastination or patience?

Remember the dead section of our favorite maple tree? I told you about it before.

Well, it's not there anymore.

A recap: The top eight or 10 feet of the center branch of our stately maple tree turned bitter brown and died. A boar squirrel scraped the bark off all the way around the trunk about 20 feet up, sprayed it to mark his turf, and waited for the leaves to die so he could use them to build the nest for his first offspring.



Following the advice of our local "tree doctor," I sprinkled red fox urine on the trunk. The squirrel, fearing its mortal enemy, decided a few leaves weren't worth becoming the main ingredient in a fox version of burgoo. So, he stayed away.

EDITORIAL: Confession comeback? Let's hope so

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EDITORIAL: Confession comeback? Let's hope so

Thirtysomething years ago, a young couple "got in trouble," as we used to say back then. The girl was a bright, outgoing high school cheerleader, the delight of her prominent church, where her father was the pastor. The boy was a friendly, polite football player, not a star but good enough to make the team, and a member of the church's youth group. They were well-liked and respected—the kind of kids you'd want your children to hang out with. But since biology is impervious to whether the participants are "good" or not, they did something scandalous, and she got pregnant.

Have you ever noticed how nothing travels faster than bad news about good people? All our school and half the town must've known about her condition before she got home from the doctor's office.



If the next Sunday wasn't High Attendance Day at their church, you couldn't convince the ushers otherwise. A huge crowd turned out. Human nature being what it is, the worshippers' motives were mixed. Some attended to support the humiliated pastor and wife. Others showed up to feast on their shame.

What happened that morning shocked every student in our school. That pastor-father commanded his daughter and her boyfriend to stand before their church and confess their sin. Their tears outnumbered their words, but they got it out: We disobeyed God. We brought shame upon our families, our church, ourselves. We are sorry.

Faith Digest

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Faith Digest

NCC nominates new leader. *The National Council of Churches has nominated a veteran educator and ecumenist to be its next general secretary. If affirmed next month by the council's governing board and general assembly, Michael Kinnamon will assume the helm of the New York-based ecumenical agency in January. Kinnamon, a Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) minister and professor of ecumenical studies at Eden Theological School in St. Louis, serves on the NCC's governing board and chairs its justice and advocacy commission.*

Conservative Episcopalians explore alternative church. *Some Episcopal bishops and more than 200 Episcopal congregations have taken a first step toward forming a new alternative to the Episcopal Church that will unite conservatives irked by the church's liberal drift. Meeting in Pittsburgh, the Common Cause Council of Bishops brought together nine North American splinter groups to lay the groundwork for a conservative counterpart to the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Church of Canada. Conservative Episcopalians, a minority in the American church, have decried the church's stance on gay rights, especially the 2003 election of an openly gay bishop in New Hampshire.*

Southerners give more to religious organizations

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Southerners give more to religious organizations

By Heather Donckels

Religion News Service

WASHINGTON (RNS)—The numbers prove it: Southerners are more generous to their churches, while lagging in other categories of giving.

Using data provided by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, a new study by empty tomb inc. shows that in 2005, Southerners gave an average \$816.81 per household to church and religious organizations while Northeasterners gave only \$453.84. And the South has been outpacing the Northeast in religious giving almost 20 years.
