BaptistWay Bible Series for May 13: Inviting all kinds of people to know Christ

May 2, 2007
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BaptistWay Bible Series for May 13

Inviting all kinds of people to know Christ

• Acts 16:13-15, 25-34

By Leroy Fenton

Bible Studies for Life Series for May13: Accept responsibility for actions

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Bible Studies for Life Series for May 13

Accept responsibility for actions

• Matthew 7:1-5; James 4:1-3,6-12

By David Harp

Explore the Bible Series for May 13: Living your beliefs is what counts

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Explore the Bible Series for May 13

Living your beliefs is what counts

• 2 Peter 1:12-21

By Kathryn Aragon

First Baptist Church, Duncanville

Sometimes we talk about something so much the words begin to lose their meaning. You know, like “freedom” and “Christian love.”

VA agrees to allow Wiccan symbols as grave markers

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VA agrees to allow Wiccan symbols as grave markers

By Robert Marus

ABP Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON (ABP)—After a 10-year struggle, the federal Department of Veterans Affairs has approved placing a pentacle on the grave markers of Wiccan soldiers buried in government cemeteries.

The decision is the result of a settlement—announced April 23 by Americans United for Separation of Church and State—between VA officials and attorneys for an array of Wiccan veterans and their relatives. It brings to an end a battle for recognition of their faith that Wiccan advocates say was prolonged due to government officials' prejudice.

Murders & Islamist candidate worry Turkish Christians

May 2, 2007
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Murders & Islamist candidate worry Turkish Christians

By Robert Marus

Associated Baptist Press

ISTANBUL (ABP)—As Turkish Christians reel from the recent brutal murders of three of their own—allegedly by radical Islamists—many Turks worry the possible election of Turkey's first devoutly Muslim president could mean more trouble.

As many as a million secularist Turks protested in Istanbul April 29 against the potential election of Abdullah Gul, according to multiple news reports. The protests follow similar ones in Ankara, the nation's capital, two weeks ago.

Texas Baptists offer relief to

victims of widespread storms

May 2, 2007
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Texas Baptist Men responded to help victims of storms that struck across the state in April.

Texas Baptists offer relief to victims of widespread storms

By Barbara Bedrick

Texas Baptist Communications

From suburban Fort Worth to the Panhandle plains to the Rio Grande, Texas Baptists provided disaster relief after a series of violent storms swept through the state.

High winds, heavy rain and a tornado killed two people and damaged more than 150 homes in Tarrant County April 13, and another storm system

followed a similar path 11 days later. Haltom City, just north of Fort Worth, experienced some of the worst damage from the first wave of storms.

Commentary: Destruction Hits Villa de Fuente Colonia...again

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Commentary: Destruction Hits Villa de Fuente Colonia...again

By Dexton Shores

Director, Border/Mexico Missions (River Ministry)

This past week, I attended the Missions Exchange at Truett Seminary and then drove on to Dallas for a meeting with our mission team and World Connex leaders. About 10 p.m. Tuesday night I received an email from one of our pastors in Eagle Pass with the word "Crisis" in the subject line. Bro. Felix Castillo then briefly explained that a tornado had just swept a path of destruction on both sides of the border killing at least seven people.

I called him immediately and learned that a significant area in the Rosita Valley area of Eagle Pass had been hit and that a mobile home had been

lifted up and landed on top of the elementary school, killing the entire family inside the mobile home. I then called Pastor Israel Rodriguez on the Mexico side of the border to learn that the same colonia of Villa de Fuente that was devasted by the flooding of the Rio Escondido in 2004 had been hard hit again, wiping out an eight square block area.

Newspapers rethink religion sections

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Newspapers rethink religion sections

By Hannah Elliott

Associated Baptist Press

NEW YORK (ABP)—The *Dallas Morning News* recently received the Religion Communicators Council award for the nation's best religion section. It was the 10th time in 11 years the *News* had won. Unfortunately for the *News*, there's no chance of an 11th title.

In January, the newspaper discontinued the section, citing economic concerns.

Baptist schools prepare â□□in case the unthinkable occursâ□□

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University of Mary-Hardin Baylor students participate in an emergency preparedness drill on campus. The exercise, held just two days after the Virginia Tech shootings, had been scheduled and planned months in advance. (Photos by Randy Yandel/UMHB)

Baptist schools prepare ‘in case the unthinkable occurs’

By Ken Camp

Managing Editor

BELTON—Police cars and fire engines lined the streets on the north side of

the University of Mary-Hardin Baylor campus. Paramedics carried students on stretchers and loaded them into ambulances. But it was just a drill—an emergency response exercise planned long before an armed rampage occurred two days earlier at Virginia Tech.

Bell County's emergency planning committee had scheduled the drill—a simulated hazardous-materials spill on the railroad tracks adjacent to the UMHB campus—months earlier, university spokesperson Carol Woodward said.

UMHB emergency response personnel confer during emergency preparedness drill.

RA boys deliver missions by the ton to Mexico

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Royal Ambassadors from First Baptist Church in Graham load and deliver 9,000 pounds of food to orphans in Piedras Negras, Mexico.

RA boys deliver missions by the ton to Mexico

By George Henson

Staff Writer

GRAHAM—Maps of the Apostle Paul's missionary journeys decorate the walls where Hunter Dooley meets for Royal Ambassadors. If someday a map chronicles Hunter's missionary travels, it will have to start with the trip he took as a 7-year-old from North Texas to an orphanage in Mexico.

He was among eight RA boys and nine adults who collected, transported and delivered 9,000 pounds of food to feed Mexican orphans. About two dozen boys helped prepare for the trek by keeping First Baptist Church in Graham informed of the need and helping load the trailer, but the smaller number made the trip.

Face death with grace and watchfulness, ethicist urges

May 2, 2007
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Face death with grace and watchfulness, ethicist urges

By Marv Knox

Editor

ABILENE—Christians must not abandon people who are dying on the doorstep of medicine, ethicist Allen Verhey pleaded.

Instead, the church should engage in “watchfulness” with the seriously ill and dying, Verhey stressed in the Maston Christian Ethics Lectures at Hardin-Simmons University’s Logsdon Seminary in Abilene.

Ethicist Allen Verhey urges churches to treat the seriously ill and dying with grace and to practice "watchfulness." He delivered the Maston Christian Ethics Lectures at Hardin-Simmons University's Logsdon Seminary. (Photo by Dave Coffield/HSU)

Baptist Briefs

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Baptist Briefs

Southern Baptists fall short of baptism goal. Southern Baptists failed to meet their goal of baptizing 1 million people in 2006, according to

statistics reported by Southern Baptist Convention-affiliated churches. Baptisms for 2006 instead declined by 1.89 percent—364,826 in 2006 versus 371,850 in 2005. The SBC baptism thrust was launched by immediate past-President Bobby Welch at the outset of his two years in office in June 2004.

International Baptists discuss local-church autonomy. Sixty seven Baptist theologians, leaders and pastors from around the world gathered at a Baptist World Alliance symposium at the German Baptist Seminary in Elstal, Berlin, to talk about the theology of the church—particularly issues of local-church autonomy. Participants examined the relationship of the local church to the larger Baptist community of associations, national conventions and unions, regional fellowships and the Baptist World Alliance. At the end of the symposium, participants issued a statement concluding, "For Baptists, the local church is wholly church but not the whole church."

CBF offers church-starter 'boot camp' at Truett. The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship's New Church Starts Boot Camp will be held July 29-Aug. 3 at Baylor University's Truett Seminary in Waco. The annual event offers individuals interested in starting churches opportunities for networking, learning about practical resources and assessing their ministerial gifts and calling. American Baptist Churches USA and the Baptist General Convention of Texas also are sponsoring the event. Featured speakers include Tom Johnson, American Baptist new-church planting coordinator; Andre Punch, BGCT congregational strategists director; and Charles Higgs, BGCT director of western-heritage ministries.