

DOWN HOME: Are you too old to wear corduroys?

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DOWN HOME: Are you too old to wear corduroys?

Joanna took me shopping, but she didn't stay long enough to protect me from the sales clerk. Oh, the humiliation.

Like most guys I know, I'm a buyer, not a shopper. The difference is the agenda. A buyer's agenda is short. He knows what he wants and goes looking for it. Nothing else matters. If he's shopping for jeans, and the store is selling \$65 dress shirts for a nickel, he'll come home only with jeans. But a shopper's agenda is open. She may need a blue sweater, but if she sees fuchsia pumps at a great price, she'll come home with fuschia pumps. And the blue sweater.

As a hard-shell buyer, I prefer to "shop" on the Internet. The Internet eliminates all the challenges of shopping—huge malls, parking, crowds, distractions and sales clerks. You type the name of the item you need, look at the options, make your pick, pay, and you're done.

But my wife of lo these many years knows that, while I'm pretty good at buying dress shirts online, my wardrobe would look like a uniform if that's the only way I bought clothes.

EDITORIAL: Prophecies needed for coming year

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A few years ago, (Actually, exactly seven years ago, January 2000. Remember [Y2K](#)?) our Sunday school quarterly focused on apocalyptic literature—mystical passages from the Old Testament books of Zechariah and Daniel, as well as mesmerizing passages from the New Testament book of Revelation. The first Sunday, our classroom nearly burst. We started the lesson several minutes late because we had to haul in chairs for all the folks who came to hear the teacher predict The End of the World as We Know It.



Within 30 minutes, I conducted the most effective ensmallment campaign

in the history of Sunday school. The majority of our first-time visitors weren't impressed when I told them: "Every passage in the Bible meant something to the people who first heard or read it. Sustained by the power of the Holy Spirit, it meant something to each succeeding generation. Thank God, it also means something for us today. But we would be indescribably arrogant to assume biblical prophecy meant nothing to all the believers in all the years up until now and was written only for people alive today." Most of the newcomers never came back. If you can't get the inside scoop on what the Mark of the Beast really looks like and determine the true identity of the Antichrist, why bother with Bible study?

This episode returned to memory Jan. 2, when televangelist [Pat Robertson](#) predicted [a terrorist attack would produce "mass killing"](#) in the United States this year. Oh, really. This from the TV preacher who predicted the U.S. coast would be "lashed by storms" and the Pacific Northwest would be smashed by "something as bad as a tsunami," both of which could happen randomly but both of which have not come true.

When you think about it, you can understand why religionists like Robertson stir up a following. People are curious. They want to know the future, whether it's the next terrorist attack, or a wave the size of Mount Rushmore, or the date when Jesus returns. That's why pastors who put on "biblical prophecy" seminars make money. Problem is, people confuse prophecy with prediction or, as [Beth Newman](#) of the Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond calls it, fortunetelling. But prophecy is something entirely different. "In Scripture, the prophets deliver a word from the Lord that always carries with it a self-judgmental call to repent, to turn to God, to be God's people," Newman explains.

Graham named among most-admired in poll for 50th time

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Graham named among most-admired in poll for 50th time

By Adelle M. Banks

Religion News Service

WASHINGTON (RNS)—Evangelist Billy Graham has been named in the Gallup Poll's top 10 "most-admired" men list for a record 50th time.

In a poll taken in mid-December, the 88-year-old evangelist came in fifth.

Billy
Graham

After 52 years at one church, pastor has no plans to quit

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After 52 years at one church, pastor has no plans to quit

By George Henson

Staff Writer

SPRING—Earl Hahn, age 84, has served as pastor at Faith Temple Baptist Church in Spring 52 years, and he has no intention of stopping now.

“As long as the Lord lets me, I’m going to keep preaching. I just continue to feel that’s his will for my life,” he said.

Texas Legislature faces critical issues

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Texas Legislature faces critical issues

By John Hall

Texas Baptist Communications

AUSTIN—Texas legislators appear poised to tackle issues that need critical attention, including medical insurance and criminal justice, as the legislature convenes Jan. 9, said Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission

Director Suzii Paynter.

"Texas is really at a turning point for its future," she said. "Unfortunately, we are at sort of the last leg in some very critical areas. Unfortunately, we're leading the nation in uninsured. Unfortunately, we're leading the nation in pollution rates. Unfortunately, we're leading the nation in the dropout rate. These are very critical issues for our state."

Texas Baptist Forum

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'Fixing' immigration

The recent well-publicized immigration raid on the Swift & Co. meatpacking plant in Cactus, in the Texas Panhandle, serves as a troubling reminder that our immigration system is broken and needs to be fixed.

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

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

Out ((Loud))

“Being in the position I am today, I do feel like a looking glass, where people living in the West can view Islam, and Muslims can view another culture. I feel comfortable looking at both and living in these two distinct zones.”

Yusuf Islam

The singer/songwriter formerly known as Cat Stevens, speaking about how his 1978 conversion to Islam allows him to live in two different realms

(USA Today/RNS)

“I’m not in the ‘Who’s Who’ of Baptists. I’m in the ‘Who’s He?’ of Baptists.”

Frank Page

Dark-horse candidate who won election as president of the Southern Baptist Convention in 2006 (RNS)

“Our tolerance is part of what makes Britain, Britain. So conform to it—or don’t come here. We don’t want the hatemongers, whatever their race, religion or creed.”

Tony Blair

British prime minister (AP/RNS)

“You meet the Lord in prayer every day. The idea of meeting him is, while disquieting, not something I think I am afraid of.”

Francis George

Chicago Roman Catholic cardinal, who was facing surgery for bladder cancer (Chicago Tribune/RNS)

Texas businesses want and need to follow the law. Unfortunately, they lack a sensible and reliable system to verify an employee's legal status.

Employers are forced to navigate tricky waters each time they make a hire. Texas businesses must deal with complex immigration regulations; a glut of seemingly valid, but sometimes counterfeit, worker identification documents; and the threat of discrimination lawsuits if they ask the "wrong" questions about employees' documents.

Volunteers warm orphansâ„ heartsâ„ and feetâ„ in Moldova

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Chris Love, a member of Bethel Baptist Church in New Caney, fits a pair of insulated boots onto a boy who lives at the Sarata orphanage in Moldova.

Volunteers warm orphans' hearts—and feet—in Moldova

By Craig Bird

Baptist Child & Family Services

Clay Palmer handed a thin, poorly dressed Moldovan child new white socks and got the typical excited smile. But what happened next was totally unexpected.

Instead of moving to the next station where volunteers were fitting children for insulated winter boots, the boy grinned broadly and headed back out the door.

On the Move

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On the Move

- **Mike Acker** to Lebanon Church in Cleburne as minister of youth.
- **John Allen** to First Church in Godley as minister of youth.
- **Gary Anthony** to First Church in Temple as minister of music from Gaston Oaks Church in Dallas.
- **C.E. Barnett** to Mount Pleasant Church in Kosse as pastor.

Apostleâ€™s grave may be beneath Rome church

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Apostle's grave may be beneath Rome church

By **Stacy Meichtry**

Religion News Service

VATICAN CITY (RNS)— Vatican officials have identified a marble sarcophagus embedded in the foundations of a Rome basilica as the coffin believed to contain the remains of the Apostle Paul.

The announcement marked the latest chapter of an excavation campaign under way since 2002, when Vatican archaeologists set out to locate the sarcophagus.

A statue of the Apostle Paul by Adamo Tadolini stands in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican. (RNS photo by Rene Shaw)

By removing barriers, church reclaims families

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By removing barriers, church reclaims families

By John Hall

Texas Baptist Communications

ALICE—Six years ago, Frank Espinoza returned with high hopes to the church he attended when he was married. He wanted to be a vital part of growing Primera Iglesia Bautista Mexicana in Alice.

Four months later, he came to a crossroads where he had to choose between his church and his family. His daughters didn't speak Spanish and weren't learning anything about Christianity at a Spanish-speaking church because of the language barrier. Soon, they didn't want to go to church.

Prize-winning biologist issues plea for religion, science to save creation

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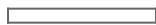
Prize-winning biologist issues plea for religion, science to save creation

By **Bob Abernathy**

Religion & Ethics NewsWeekly

WASHINGTON (RNS)—Pulitzer Prize-winning scientist [E.O. Wilson](#) fears for creation—for many of the 10 million or more species of plants and animals he believes are in mortal peril.

Wilson, a biologist who recently retired from Harvard University, has written a new book, [The Creation](#), that is a plea for science and religion to work together to save the species.



Religious affiliations of Texas congressional delegation

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