

Otto Arango's earnings claims disputed by directors of missions

November 3, 2006

Updated: 11/03/06



In 2004,
Charles
Wade,
BGCT
executive
director,
speaks to
an
[audience](#)
[of](#)
[Mexican](#)
[church](#)
[starters](#)
as Otto
Arango,
director of
the
Church
Starting
Institute,
translates.
Arango is
now a
central
figure in a
misuse of
funds
scandal.

Otto Arango's earnings claims disputed by directors of missions

By Ken Camp

Managing Editor

Investigators who probed misuse of Texas Baptist church starting funds in the Rio Grande Valley reported Otto Arango—one of the central figures around whom allegations swirled—claimed he earned at least \$14,000 a month from Baptist associations in Texas. But leaders of associations named in the report dispute that assertion.

Arango's lifestyle—living in an expensive home in an exclusive neighborhood and driving luxury cars—raised questions among some fellow pastors in the Rio Grande Valley about the sources of his income. In part, their suspicions triggered the investigation that uncovered evidence of misused Texas Baptist church starting funds in the region.

BGCT faces challenges, leaders say

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BGCT faces challenges, leaders say

By Ken Camp

Managing Editor

An investigation that uncovered evidence of mismanagement and misuse of Texas Baptist church starting funds in the Rio Grande Valley presents major challenges for the Baptist General Convention of Texas—and especially [Executive Director Charles Wade](#), some state convention leaders agreed.

“Anytime a leader makes a mistake which proves significant, his or her leadership is called into question. The investigation clearly indicated that Dr. Wade’s response to concerns expressed several times over a period of years was inadequate,” said Bob Fowler of Houston, chairman of the BGCT Executive Board.

	
Borrego	Bell

EDITORIAL: Executive Board

must rise to the occasion

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EDITORIAL:

Executive Board must rise to the occasion

Now is the time for members of the Baptist General Convention of Texas' newly reorganized Executive Board to act courageously, wisely, decisively and quickly to pull the convention back from the calamity of administrative failure. They must restore trust in the face of scandal.

The depth of calamity became apparent during the Executive Board's called meeting Oct. 31. Members received a report on misappropriation of church starting funds in the Rio Grande Valley. The report told a terrible tale—at least \$1.3 million in wasted money, years lost on a failed church starting scheme, lies and deception, and finger pointing.



The tone in the room resembled previous dark days, when fundamentalists attacked our convention. The prevailing attitude was to find external evildoers, rail against the wrong they did and rally around our guys. This is

the tactic that enabled the BGCT to defeat fundamentalism, for which traditional, progressive Baptists are enormously grateful.

But fundamentalism no longer is the BGCT's gravest threat. Our beloved convention faces far greater dangers from within—apathy among Texas Baptists and perceived irrelevance of the BGCT. Now add mistrust and suspicion. A frontal assault on adversarial bloggers and a hunker-down mentality won't sustain, much less strengthen, the convention when loyal Baptists wonder if the BGCT will steward their trust and make a difference in their churches, and when they begin to feel they could not care less.

Around the State

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Westlake Chapel in Graham has broken ground on an expansion of the fellowship hall. The project will add 750 square feet to the existing building and will provide space for additional Sunday school classes, community outreach events, church-wide fellowships and better accommodations for other community organizations that utilize the facilities. Construction funds are in hand, and only funds for the furnishings now are needed. Don Raney, second from left, is pastor.

Around the State

- The University of Mary Hardin-Baylor will hold a cultural fest Nov. 7 at 7 p.m. in the Shelton Theater of the Mabey Student Center. It is free and open to the public. It will include various types of music and expressive dance. For more information, call (254) 295-5519.
- The University of Mary Hardin-Baylor will hold a fireworks display as a part of its homecoming festivities Nov. 10, marking the beginning of what is planned as a new tradition. Homecoming events will begin at 11 a.m. Friday during the chapel service. Following chapel, the alumni association will present its distinguished alumni award at the Heritage Club luncheon. Honorary alumni awards will be presented during the alumni fiesta that evening. The homecoming pep rally, which will include the fireworks, will begin at 8:30 p.m. Saturday's events include a golf tournament, a barbecue lunch and the 2 p.m. football game. Reservations must be made through the alumni office. For more information, call (254) 295-4599.
- East Texas Baptist University has welcomed several new faculty members this fall, including Denise Allen, assistant professor of nursing; Eileen Baland, instructor of English; Eric Branscome, instructor of music; Robin Cook, instructor of business; Cassandra Falke, assistant professor of English; Cole Franklin, associate professor of communication; Sandy Hoover, instructor of history; Joanna Newkirk, instructor in kinesiology and associate athletic trainer; Yu Youling, visiting scholar from Lanzhou University of Technology in China; and Lin Weisheng, visiting professor from Guang-dong Teachers College of Foreign Languages and Arts in China.



San Marcos Baptist Academy held its annual sweetheart pageant recently, crowning Nicole Hoffman, center, sweetheart. Also pictured are her escort, Josh Brame, and the ladies of the court—from left, Michelle Deschner, Jacqueline Piers, Le'Resa Stokes, Arianna Taboada and Emily Rainone.

New audio Bible features all-African-American cast

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New audio Bible features all-African-

American cast

By Adelle Banks

Religion News Service

WASHINGTON (RNS)—In a new audio Bible, the Holy Trinity has some familiar voices. Actor Samuel L. Jackson plays God, actor Blair Underwood performs the role of Jesus and Dallas megachurch pastor Bishop T.D. Jakes renders the Holy Spirit.

Texas Baptists prepare for annual meeting

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Texas Baptists prepare for annual meeting

By John Hall

Texas Baptist Communications

Texas Baptists are set to celebrate cooperative ministry, elect a new president and vote on a proposed \$50.6 million budget when they gather Nov. 13-14 for the Baptist General Convention of Texas [annual meeting](#) in

Dallas.

BGCT President [Michael Bell](#), pastor of Greater St. Stephen First Baptist Church in Fort Worth, said the meeting will be a time for Texas Baptists to come together to worship, celebrate their accomplishments from the past year and look forward to where God is calling them in the coming year.

Book Reviews

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Book Reviews

[Covenant & Commandment: A Study of the Ten Commandments in the Context of Grace](#) by C.W. Christian (Smyth & Helwys)

In this “call to freedom,” C.W. Christian insists covenant and law are “inseparable” but not “reciprocal.” He reminds us of the biblical order—covenant, commandment, covenant—and instructs, “The law is the law of the covenant.”

Christian provides practical and contemporary applications after each commandment that are refreshing and thought-provoking. He presents grace as the bedrock to approach two of the most important words in Judaism and Christianity. His use and explanation of commandment as it relates to common life today removes the stigma of time restraints placed so often on the Ten Commandments.

Baptist Briefs

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Baptist Briefs

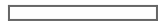
Southwestern drills for gas. [Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary](#) administrators recently signed a contract with a Fort Worth company to drill for natural gas on the school's campus. The [Barnett Shale](#)—a geological formation of sedimentary rock believed to contain trillions of cubic feet of natural gas—runs underneath the seminary's Fort Worth campus. President Paige Patterson told the school's trustees that over the life of the contract, it potentially could bring the seminary millions of dollars in royalties.

Missouri convention kicks out churches. The [Missouri Baptist Convention](#) voted Oct. 31 to oust 19 congregations because of their affiliations with moderate Baptist groups. During its 172nd annual meeting in Cape Girardeau, the convention voted to refuse to seat messengers from any of the congregations at the meeting or future meetings. The convention has a single-alignment requirement that prohibits churches from belonging to other Baptist organizations. The vote came without recorded dissent. Only one of the congregations—most of which had been warned about the move to oust them ahead of time—sent messengers to the meeting.

Cartoon

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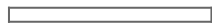


News of religion, faith, missions, Bible study and Christian ministry among Texas Baptist churches, in the BGCT, the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) and around the world.

Former Operation Christmas child recipients now giving

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Youth at
Broadway
Baptist
Church in
Fort
Worth put
together
packages
for
Operation
Christmas
Child.

Former Operation Christmas child recipients now giving

By George Henson

Staff Writer

FORT WORTH—Most people who fill a shoebox with treats and trinkets for an orphan a world away can only guess of the happiness the [Operation Christmas Child](#) ministry brings. Four Fort Worth girls who once lived in Russian orphanages have a much keener understanding.

Now a part of Chris and Marla Morris' family and the youth group at [Broadway Baptist Church](#) in Fort Worth, the two sets of sisters have moved from being recipients of the shoeboxes to being on the giving side of ministry.

CityReach seeks to mobilize volunteers

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CityReach seeks to mobilize volunteers

DALLAS—Paul Henderson shook his head.

“Three of four car transmissions we checked today had burnt transmission fluid,” said Henderson, a volunteer mechanic serving single mothers through the Car Care Ministry of Colonial Baptist Church in Pleasant Grove.

One of those cars, belongs to Christie Emmesberger. She got a car wash, fresh transmission fluid, a new air filter and peace of mind for free.

“Seven children under age 16 depend on me to drive,” Emmesberger explained. “Now I know that my car won’t break down.”

Christie
Emmesberger,
a single
mother from
the Pleasant
Grove area of
Dallas,
receives free
car service,
thanks to
volunteers
from Colonial
Baptist
Church of
Dallas such as
Sunday school
teacher Paul
Henderson
and Pastor
Steve White.

Prison ministry founder resigns

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Prison ministry founder resigns

By Adelle Banks

Religion News Service

WASHINGTON (RNS)—Prison Fellowship founder [Chuck Colson](#) has announced his resignation as chairman of the board of the ministry he started 30 years ago.