

EDITORIAL: Who will you trust on Election Day?

October 27, 2006

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[Election Day](#) is upon us. Have you decided how you're going to vote? Whether you vote early or stand in line on Election Day, what's important is that you study the issues, compare the candidates and vote your conscience. In a year when U.S. troops are risking their lives so others may enjoy the benefits of freedom, Americans should not scorn and diminish those benefits by failing to vote.

We might expect Texas to produce a big turnout this time around, especially for an off-year election. Featuring four significant, well-financed candidates, the governor's race has been more interesting than any Texas political contest in a long time. Independent candidates Kinky Friedman and Carole Keeton Strayhorn ensure that. Friedman brings his mix of humor and ambiguity to the fray. You can't help but wonder, "Is this guy for real, or is he playing out a long, expensive, elaborate joke?" Strayhorn adds irony. Here's a lifelong political insider and government veteran running as an outsider. Oh, and don't forget Chris Bell and Rick Perry, who have run as what they are—the Democratic and Republican candidates.



The gubernatorial race should remind us of a fact stated by ethicist/author [Tony Campolo: "God is not a Republican or a Democrat."](#) In Texas this year, Campolo would have to add: "God is not an independent, either."

Most of us see this as obvious. But a significant number of our fellow citizens don't get it. Often, they're Christians who seem to believe the only moral issues are abortion and homosexual marriage. They say (and I'm not making this up), "I don't see how you can call yourself a Christian and vote for a Democrat." Occasionally, someone will come down on the other side, singling out justice and care for the poor as paramount issues and questioning whether a person can follow Jesus' commands to care for the "least of these" and still be a Republican.

Churchesâ Hurricane Katrina response offers lessons

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Churches' Hurricane Katrina response offers lessons

By Ken Camp

Managing Editor

BATON ROUGE, La.—Churches and other places of worship that served as “the true first responders” when [Hurricane Katrina](#) hit the Gulf Coast last year learned lessons about disaster preparedness that could benefit all faith communities, researchers at Louisiana State University have concluded.

In particular, improved disaster response coordination and communication within and between churches would help faith communities avoid costly and ineffective duplication of services, surveyed congregations told researchers.

Texas Baptist Forum

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Texas Baptist Forum

All Saints' Day

Halloween candy's appearance on supermarket shelves usually coincides

with the arrival of crisp autumn mornings, gaining an hour of sleep and an array of costumes. Halloween is an annual staple of our nation's economy and a fixture on the calendar. Not all Christians embrace the custom, but its presence is nearly impossible to ignore.

Christians often ignore the day after Halloween—[All Saints' Day](#).

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

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



“Your love for our family has helped to provide the healing we so desperately need. Gifts you’ve given have touched our hearts in a way no words can describe. Your compassion has reached beyond our family, beyond our community, and is changing our world, and for this we sincerely thank you.”

Marie Roberts

Widow of Charles Roberts, who killed five girls in an Amish schoolhouse Oct. 2, in an open letter to Pennsylvania’s Amish community (RNS)

“I figured, you don’t take it with you.”

Donald Saltz

Philanthropist, who donated \$5 million—one of the largest individual donations to a house of worship in the United States in years—to his synagogue in Washington, D.C. (Washington Post/RNS)

“The devil has long since concluded that he’s not really going to be able to defeat the Lord in open matters of conflict ... so he infiltrates from the inside. Our people have been misfed and misled.”

William Shaw

President of the National Baptist Convention, USA, criticizing “prosperity gospel” (RNS)

While All Saints' Day is not found on the secular calendar, it is an important date on the Christian calendar. For centuries, Christians have paused to celebrate, remember and learn from the exemplary lives of faithful saints and martyrs. Such cultivation of collective memory rewards the living with lessons from the dead. Giving a voice to those Christians who paved our way is an inextricable ingredient of the Christian tradition.

On the Move

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On the Move

- **Joban Baeza** to Cranes Mill Church in Canyon Lake as youth minister.
 - **John Bell** to First Church in Bridgeport as associate minister of music from Trinity Church in Lewisville, where he was associate pastor/worship and music.
 - **William Brackney** has resigned as pastor of Blue Ridge Church in Marlin.
 - **Bill Bryant** to First Church in Sargent as pastor.
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Network reaffirms call for “culture of life”

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Network reaffirms call for ‘culture of life’

By Adelle Banks

Religion News Service

WASHINGTON (RNS)—A network of evangelical and Catholic leaders, reaffirming its call to build up a “culture of life,” has issued a new statement that links the biblical principle of loving one’s neighbor to care for the unborn, the frail and the dying.

“The direct and intentional taking of innocent human life in abortion, euthanasia, assisted suicide and embryonic research is rightly understood as murder,” declares the new statement, [“That They May Have Life” from Evangelicals and Catholics Together](#).

Motion: “Pastor, ask her to

marry youâ€

October 27, 2006

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Motion: 'Pastor, ask her to marry you'

By George Henson

Staff Writer

MERIDIAN—Pastor Drew Dabbs' marriage proposal was one for the books—the church business meeting minutes' books.

Peggy McDowell, a member at Spring Creek Baptist Church in Meridian, had been bragging on her pastor and his girlfriend, Emily Snowden, whom she was convinced would make a fine pastor's wife. She lamented to a friend that Dabbs hadn't yet asked Snowden to marry him.

Pastor
Drew
Dabbs
proposes
marriage
to Emily
Snowden
following
a motion
approved
in a
business
meeting
at Spring
Creek
Baptist
Church
in
Meridian.

Texas Tidbits

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Texas Tidbits

Finalists chosen for BGCT Battle of the Bands. Twelve Texas Baptist performing groups have been selected as finalists for the Battle of the Bands at the Dallas Convention Center during the Baptist General Convention of Texas' [Weekend Fest](#) Nov. 11-12. The bands and their sponsors are Beyond Riches, Georgetown Baptist Church in Pottsboro; The Flipside, First Baptist Church in Irving; GP1, Primera Baptist Church in Fort Worth; Iconoclast, Casa View Baptist Church in Dallas; Inspired by Eden, South Main Baptist Church in Pasadena; Jonathan Stege Band, First Baptist Church in Lubbock; Look to the Sky, North Pointe Baptist Church in Hurst; Luminaria Rock, Coastal Bend Fellowship in Kingsville; Nameless, Central Baptist Church in Buna; The Opera Stage, Primera Iglesia Bautista in Dallas; 30 Coin Ransom, Trinity Baptist Church in San Antonio; and Trae Castles Band, Connect Church in Arlington. The grand-prize winner will receive studio recording time and a spot on YEC fx band line-up in July 2007.

Baylor regents OK tuition increase. At their October meeting, [Baylor University's board of regents](#) authorized an 8 percent tuition increase—raising the annual cost to \$22,200 for a student taking 12 hours or more per semester in 2007-2008. The general student fee will increase 6.07 percent to \$2,270 for next year. Room and board rates for undergraduates will increase by 5.02 percent and 3.61 percent, respectively. In total, a freshman entering Baylor in fall 2007 will pay 6.98 percent more in tuition, fees, room and board than a freshman entering this year. Tuition for graduate students will increase by 7.93 percent. Truett Seminary students will experience a 7.96 percent increase. Law students in fall 2007 will see a 7.52 percent increase.

TOGETHER:    We do our business out in the open   

October 27, 2006

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TOGETHER: 'We do our business out in the open'

Our convention is committed to open communication and careful, thorough discussion of matters that concern our churches and our Baptist mission in Texas and beyond.

Last December, I finally realized concerns that had been raised with me from time to time regarding our church-starting practices in the Rio Grande Valley required a [more thorough investigation](#) than I had been able to achieve through the normal staff channels available to me.



Executive Director
BGCT Executive
Board

Then, early this year, Palo Pinto Baptist Association called for our Executive Board to investigate the matter. After discussing the situation with board and convention officers, we agreed we would engage an experienced attorney from the Valley to get to the bottom of this. Her report will be presented to our board on Tuesday, Oct. 31, at the Baptist Building in Dallas.

There will be time for a thorough presentation by the attorneys and for questions from Executive Board members. The Baptist Standard will report on the findings and the board discussion in next week's issue.

Valley probe forthcoming

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Valley probe forthcoming

The Baptist General Convention of Texas Executive Board will hold a special called meeting Oct. 31 to hear the [findings of an investigation](#) regarding alleged misappropriation of church-starting funds in the Rio Grande Valley.

Officers of the BGCT and its Executive Board had enlisted Brownsville

attorney Diane Dillard to conduct an independent investigation of alleged mishandling of church-starting funds in the Valley.

The board endorsed the probe at its May meeting, approved \$50,000 from contingency funds for the investigation and granted the board's chair and the BGCT executive director the ability to authorize another \$50,000 if needed. Last month, the board authorized up to an additional \$50,000 for the investigation.

The probe centered on suspicions regarding the large number of cell-group missions reported as church starts in the lower Rio Grande Valley from 1996 to 2000. Critics alleged some church starts that received financial help from the BGCT never existed except on paper, and some individuals may have profited by claiming to start multiple, nonexistent "mystery missions."

Empty bowls help fill ministry's empty shelves

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Gary
Glass,
Plainview
fire chief,
signs his
name to
the
bottom of
a bowl he
created
for the
Empty
Bowls
project
during a
pottery
session.
Glass and
wife
Melody
joined the
women's
basketball
squad in
creating
pots for
the
hunger
relief
effort.

Empty bowls help fill ministry's empty shelves

By Teresa Young

Wayland Baptist University

PLAINVIEW—Normally, a lump of clay has nothing to do with the plight of world hunger. But for a project at [Wayland Baptist University](#), the two are tightly interwoven.

The university's fine arts division is participating in the Empty Bowls project, where people from all walks of life create unique pottery bowls with guidance from an instructor. The bowls are then sold to raise money for local hunger-relief organizations. But there's another purpose for the project, as well.



Stephanie Shaw, assistant coach to the Wayland Flying Queens, works on her bowl alongside Mark Hilliard, assistant professor of art, at a bowl-making session held recently. Shaw and the other Queens players created two bowls each during the evening.

Cybercolumn by Berry Simpson: Hope

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CYBER COLUMN: Hope

By Berry Simpson

I was on a flight from Houston to Washington, D.C., sitting in an aisle seat "C," even though my boarding pass said "A," by the window, which would be my preference.

When I boarded the plane, a young professionally dressed woman was already sitting in my "A" seat. She didn't seem the sort who would intentionally sit in the wrong seat just to get a window view. In fact, most people prefer aisle seats, since they have a bit more leg room and easier access to walk around, so if someone sits in the wrong seat, they are more

likely to sit in an aisle seat than a window seat. Not me. I like the window seat so I can watch the passing 3-D map outside my window. But since this window looked out over the wing and my fellow passenger looked like she'd set up camp, I sat in the "C" seat, feeling generous and self-righteous.

Berry D. Simpson

RIGHT or WRONG? Christian maturity

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RIGHT or WRONG? Christian maturity

In 1 Corinthians 13:11, the Apostle Paul compares and contrasts his behavior as a child and an adult. But is it possible that people mature in some ways and not in others? Would this explain why some demonstrate great strength in their profession, but their sense of ethical judgment remains almost preadolescent?