

# Baptist Briefs

August 4, 2006

Posted: 8/04/06

## Baptist Briefs

**SBC president flip-flops on women in ministry.** Southern Baptist Convention President Frank Page has recanted as “radical” and “extreme” his early views advocating expanded roles for women in ministry. In his 1980 doctoral dissertation at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Page wrote: “There are solid biblical bases for a full recognition of the freedom and responsibility of women in ministry and the freedom of God’s Spirit to bestow the gifts for ministry upon men and women alike. The time has come to declare that since the public activity of a woman is in most areas no longer considered as a breach of the marriage vow and since the law of the land no longer denies to women the right to act independently in mixed gatherings, qualified women are eligible candidates for any office in the church.” But in a recent interview with the Florida Baptist Witness, he said, “I was trying very hard to conform biblical passages to some cultural preferences of the time.” Page insisted he became convinced “through personal study and prayer” that his dissertation was not exegetically sound and reflected the work of an “immature theologian.”

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**Leland Center president plans to step down.** Randell Everett, pastor of First Baptist Church in Newport News, Va., will resign at the end of the year as president of the John Leland Center for Theological Studies, where he has served the past nine years. The Leland Center offers diploma, master of divinity and master of theological studies classes to about 150

students a year. Formed in 1997, the center emphasizes diversity and a commitment to churches in and near Washington, D.C. The center recently received full accreditation from the Association of Theological Schools and soon will become a partner in the Washington Theological Consortium.

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## Cartoon

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<p>“After all Merv’s brooding about religion, he has developed a skeptic ulcer.”</p>
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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.

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# Churches of Christ, Baptists branch off same family tree

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## Churches of Christ, Baptists branch off same family tree

**By Ted Parks**

*Associated Baptist Press*

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (ABP)—Some Baptists may remember hearing their Church of Christ neighbors called “Campbellites.” And most Baptists know Churches of Christ are strictly a cappella, preferring unaccompanied singing to pianos, organs or any other instrument. They may not know the group has Baptists in its family tree.

But Baptists, with their well-known history of discord, might be even more surprised to learn that the non-instrumental Churches of Christ and the pro-instrumental Christian Churches met peaceably this summer for the first time in 100 years.

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# 2nd Opinion: âHard to tell Christians from lionsâ

August 4, 2006

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## 2nd Opinion: 'Hard to tell Christians from lions'

**By James Martin**

The description of a special method of torture that U.S. soldiers inflicted on Iraqi prisoners sounded instantly familiar. As someone who has read many histories of the Christian martyrs, it didn't take long to remember where the brand of punishment had been used before.

"Other detainees were locked for as many as seven days in cells so small that they could neither stand nor lie down," Eric Schmitt recently wrote in *The New York Times* about U.S. special operations troops in Iraq.

In the 16th century, the Jesuit priests and brothers martyred in England were treated to the same deprivations. The torture used against my brother Jesuits, which had long been viewed as unnaturally cruel, is now used by my own country.

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# **Criswell era ends at Dallas First Baptist**

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## **Criswell era ends at Dallas First Baptist**

**By Ken Camp**

*Managing Editor*

DALLAS—An era ended at First Baptist Church of Dallas Aug. 2. Betty Criswell, widow of legendary Pastor W.A. Criswell, died at Baylor University Medical Center of Dallas of respiratory illness at age 93.

Mrs. Criswell stood beside her husband through his early pastorates in rural Oklahoma and nearly a half-century of ministry at the downtown Dallas church.

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## **DOWN HOME: And for an encore, clean the garage**

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# **DOWN HOME: And for an encore, clean the garage**

We have done the unthinkable.

Well, unthinkable to me, anyway.

Joanna, the brains of our outfit, however, has been thinking the unthinkable for quite awhile. My wife pays attention to trends and outcomes and scenarios. Plus, she loves me and wants what's best for me.

So, we sold our house. And we agreed to buy a new one, which makes sense unless living in a washing-machine box under the overpass becomes the next home "thing."

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# **EDITORIAL: Sooner or later, one day will be final**

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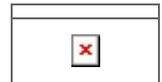
# **EDITORIAL: Sooner or later, one day will be final**

Are we living in the final days?

The question has been asked quite a bit lately. With all the fighting

between Hezbollah and the Israeli army, even secular media have wondered if the time has come for the final showdown between good and evil. The End Times question inevitably arises when the nation of Israel goes to battle. Several reasons prompt such speculation.

First, some people say God has a special relationship with Israel. They point to the covenant between God and Abraham, recorded in Genesis 12. They equate the secular political state of Israel with the descendants of Abraham. And they believe God's covenant with Israel—whether Israel is an ancient tribe, a religious people group or a modern nation—extends to today. So, they expect God to protect the nation of Israel.



Second, some people read the highly symbolic message of Revelation literally, interpreting it to mean a battle in the Holy Land could signal The End. This interpretation particularly applies if the fighting reaches the plain of Megiddo. Also known as Armageddon, it was the site of many ancient conflicts and the location of a prophesied battle in Revelation 16:16, "And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon." Some interpreters of Revelation assume any battle at Megiddo, particularly a war with religious overtones such as the current conflict, could signal the final good/evil showdown.

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**All God's children have a**

# place in corporate America

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## All God's children have a place in corporate America

**By Candace Goforth**

*Religion News Service*

WASHINGTON (RNS)—Experts suggest these ways to give employees room to express their faith without smothering others:

- Holiday swapping
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## Federal funds flow to religious activities

August 4, 2006

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## Federal funds flow to religious

# activities

**By Adelle Banks**

*Religion News Service*

WASHINGTON (RNS)—An examination of the White House's faith-based initiative has revealed some organizations are not separating religious activities from federally funded services.

At the request of two members of Congress, the U.S. Government Accountability Office spent more than a year conducting a review of federal and state agencies related to the White House Office of Faith-based and Community Initiatives. The GAO also investigated religious groups that have received government grants.

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## **Christian graphic novels illustrate timeless truth**

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## **Christian graphic novels illustrate timeless truth**

**By Angela Best**

*Communications Intern*

Robert Luedke loved reading comic books and drawing when he was growing up. A few years ago, he fell in love with Jesus. Now, Luedke is bringing the loves of his life together.

Luedke, president of Head Press Publishing and author of *Eye Witness—A Fictional Tale of Absolute Truth* and *Eye Witness Book Two—Acts of the Spirit*, is pioneering a new literary genre—the Christian-themed graphic novel, or illustrated Christian fiction.

Robert Luedke's <i>Eye Witness</i> graphic novels present New Testament stories in a comic-style format.	
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**One American in five attends a**

# house church, research shows

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## One American in five attends a house church, research shows

**By Hannah Elliott**

*Associated Baptist Press*

DALLAS (ABP)—For the first time, advocates of the house-church movement in America have solid facts to back up their enthusiasm. Research indicates about one in five American adults attends a house church at least once a month.

While participants themselves have long said that an increasing number of Americans are moving from First Baptist on Main Street to living-room congregations, the very nature of home churches—decentralized, undocumented and unadvertised—has made them difficult to study until now.

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## IRS cracks down on church

# campaigning

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## IRS cracks down on church campaigning

**By John Hall**

*Texas Baptist Communications*

The Internal Revenue Service is stepping up efforts to stop illegal political campaigning by non-profit organizations, including churches.

The IRS is increasing enforcement to stop illegal campaigning during the political season, said IRS Commissioner Mark Everson. The IRS opened reviews of 132 cases of alleged illegal campaigning as a result of complaints from the 2004 elections. Twenty-two cases were closed without contacting the taxpayer.