

Cartoon

July 7, 2006

Posted: 7/07/06

“Because of
the water
shortage, we
recommend
an extra brick
in the
baptistry and
baptisms only
on odd-
numbered
Sundays.”

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.

2nd Opinion: Of Jonathan Edwards & McDonaldâ€™s

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Driving back over the Appalachian Mountains from a family wedding in Canada, we passed Stockbridge, Mass. This town was the lesser-known base of operations for Jonathan Edwards' missionary labors. More famously, Edwards resided in Northampton, the central location for the dramatic 18th century revivals of the Great Awakening in New England.

As an Edwards aficionado, I was aware of the Edwards/Stockbridge connection. I wasn't cognizant of the even less-well-known relationship between Edwards and McDonald's until, as we hurtled by Stockbridge in our minivan, we decided time had come to eat. And behold, we did what surely would have surprised the famous evangelical leader. We picked up a drive-thru McDonald's.

I wondered whether Edwards and McDonald's have anything in common. Could it be that the slight guilty feeling as I munched the salty fries was reminiscent of the stellar theological tome *Original Sin*, penned in Stockbridge? Was our choice to do a drive-thru right there and then predetermined in a classically philosophically charged "freedom of the will" fashion? Or was the can-do spirit of the frontier that surrounded Edwards' missionary journey represented, albeit somewhat differently, by the can-do franchise dominance of fast-food chains in America?

Whimsical thoughts aside, I also began to wonder how—or whether—Edwards would critique McDonald's. Could Edwards approvingly have been involved in a "super-size me" Puritan Jeremiad of fast-food, gut-busting obesity issues in the modern West? Or, rather more pointedly, how is it that the Puritan genetic code in the foundation of the country has managed to be expressed in mercantile relations of Big Macs and

milkshakes? Was there something in the original theological code that was liable to be taken in such a direction, or has modern life encapsulated the gospel (sanitized it) in gilded-cage commercial enterprises?

DBU students serve Peruvian orphans through Buckner

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The DBU team gathers for a group photo with children at an orphanage.
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DBU students serve Peruvian orphans through Buckner

By Tim Gingrich

Dallas Baptist University

DALLAS—Forty-seven Dallas Baptist University students, faculty and staff

started their summer break by spending two weeks serving orphanages in Peru.

Each morning, the volunteers worked on service projects—repainting walls, doing yard work and repairing broken facilities. During the hot afternoon, they played with the children.

DOWN HOME: It's summertime; put on your parka

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DOWN HOME: It's summertime; put on your parka

Here's something that doesn't make sense to me: Why must we shiver so much in the summertime?

I'm not talking about cataclysmic climatological calamity. The nearest stock tank, swimming pool and/or septic tank isn't about to freeze up. It's July in Texas, and you can bet the daytime highs will be somewhere between 90 degrees and the mean temperature of Hades.

But if you decide to shop for groceries, take in a movie or eat out in the summer, pack a parka and put on closed-toed shoes.



The other weekend, Joanna, Molly and I went to see Les Miserables at the Music Hall at Fair Park in Dallas. By the end of the first scene, you could've convinced me the French fought the insurrection of 1832 on top of a Greenland glacier. A north gale howled down my back, and I was so cold, I could hardly keep up with the plot. After intermission, Jo convinced me to get under her shawl and scrunch close to Molly, who sat between us. (My wise wife's learned to layer her clothing, bring a sweater or shawl, and otherwise prepare for indoor frost in the summer. Nothing fazes her anymore.)

EDITORIAL: What difference does it really make?

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EDITORIAL: What difference does it really make?

After dinner not long ago, a wonderful friend asked a poignant question: "What's it mean to be a Christian?"

My friend is a lifelong Baptist and a serious Christian. We've known each other more than two decades, and we've talked often about the challenge of living the Christian life, particularly as parents, in a secular, materialistic community. She wasn't asking how a person becomes a Christian or what

happens after death. She was asking: What difference does it make—or should it make—to be a Christian?

My friend's question stuck with me. A comprehensive reply could fill many books, but here's the short version of my answer. I hope and pray it prompts you to think about the difference being a Christian makes in your life.



- **Our lives have purpose.** We are created, known and called out by God.

Gibson's Passion sparked new relationship between faith & film

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Gibson's *Passion* sparked new relationship between faith & film

By David Anderson

Religion News Service

NEW YORK (RNS)—There is a lot of buzz these days in both religious and Hollywood circles that a new relationship is being forged between faith and film. Is it for real, or is it just a lot of hype?

Michael Flaherty, president of Walden Media, a partner with Walt Disney Studios in bringing C.S. Lewis' *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe* to the silver screen, comes down on the side of the optimists.

New York's highest court punts gay-marriage dispute to legislators

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New York's highest court punts

gay-marriage dispute to legislators

By Robert Marus

Associated Baptist Press

ALBANY, N.Y. (ABP)—New York's highest court has ruled that the state's constitution neither requires nor bans the legalization of same-sex marriage, saying the question is one for the state's legislators to decide.

The July 6 ruling dealt a blow to gay-rights activists but was not as broad as many gay-marriage opponents had preferred.

Texas Baptist Forum

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Texas Baptist Forum

Unity, not division

In his letter excluding female church leaders (June 12), Brian Thompson cited several Scriptures and concluded we must trust in the authority of the Bible. In my entire Baptist experience, I have never been in a Baptist church where women aren't allowed to talk, teach Sunday school, wear their Sunday best, wear earrings and wedding and engagement rings, wear makeup and have their uncovered hair in the latest styles. Yet with the same scriptural authority that Thompson cites, these practices are

problematic.

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

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



“A growth-oriented congregation won't shut down for the summer. They can change programs, perhaps, but they need to recognize that church-shoppers expect to see ‘merchandise on display,’ not ‘empty shelves.’ Some churches, in fact, offer more in the summer, not less.”

Tom Ehrich

Writer, consultant, workshop leader
and Episcopal priest from Durham,
N.C. (RNS)

“The language of the Declaration (of Independence) marked an important shift in early American history. Prior to Philadelphia and the Revolution, most public professions of faith were Christian, whether the words came from Anglicans in Jamestown or Puritans in New England. In declaring the colonies’ independence from Great Britain, though, the Founders were also making another declaration: That Americans respected the idea of God, understood the universe to be governed by moral and religious forces, and prayed for divine protection against the enemies of this world, but were not interested in establishing yet another earthly government with official ties to a state church.”

Jon Meacham

Managing editor of Newsweek
magazine, in his new book, American
Gospel: God, the Founding Fathers and
the Making of a Nation (RNS)

Also, in my reading of these Scriptures, it appears that they are addressing family relationships, not clergy or deacons. Scripture does cite several early female church leaders. More importantly, Jesus communicated clearly in the gospels that men and women, Jew and Gentile, and free and slave were equals in every way. The very first person to proclaim the good news to a group of people was Mary Magdalene, and her authority to do so came as a direct command from Jesus himself.

We as Baptists are congregationalists, and this issue is clearly the prerogative of each congregation. If a person's cultural and social perspective makes one feel uncomfortable in a church that has female leaders, find another Baptist church more to one's preference.

Longview church in home of its own

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Longview church in home of its own

By Laura Frase

Communications Intern

LONGVIEW—As a worship service ends, Pastor Willie Cabrera invites church members and visitors to move from the sanctuary to a fellowship event in the church's kitchen.

It's a special time because having a kitchen to move to—or a worship center to move from—marks a new day for Primera Iglesia Bautista in Longview.

Charges dismissed against Missouri institutions

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Charges dismissed against Missouri institutions

By Vicki Brown

Word & Way

JEFFERSON CITY, MO. (ABP)—A Missouri judge dismissed conspiracy charges June 27 filed by the Missouri Baptist Convention against four Baptist entities, but the convention may appeal the ruling.

Cole County Circuit Court Judge Thomas Brown dismissed conspiracy counts against the Baptist Home, Word & Way, the Missouri Baptist Foundation and Windermere Baptist Conference Center.

On the Move

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On the Move

- **Carlos Alvarez** to Primera Iglesia in Buffalo as pastor.
 - **Everett Barry** to Oak Crest Church in Midlothian as interim pastor.
 - **Corey Bearden** to First Church in San Marcos as minister to students from Park Meadows Church in Waxahachie, where he was youth pastor.
 - **Richard Boswell** to First Church in Sinton as transitional pastor.
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Single ministers face multiple hurdles

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Single ministers face multiple hurdles

By George Henson

Staff Writer

Churches that point to biblical proof-texts as their basis for excluding women from consideration as pastors may not look to the Bible when they discount single men, as well. But single men have almost as hard a time as women finding ministerial positions—especially as pastors—in Texas Baptist churches, some observers noted.

Student placement staff at Baylor University's Truett Theological Seminary and Hardin-Simmons University's Logsdon Seminary say the lack of a wife can make the search for a place of service difficult.