

Church growth does not equal kingdom growth, speaker says

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Church growth does not equal kingdom growth, speaker says

By Ken Camp

Managing Editor

DALLAS—Church growth does not necessarily result in expansion of God's kingdom, a Canadian pastor told a Texas Baptist conference.

"It is possible to participate in church expansion and unintentionally be an agent for shrinking the kingdom of God," Jeff Christopherson, pastor of The Sanctuary in Oakville, Ontario, said at Epicenter, a spiritual formation and missions event sponsored by the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

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| Canadian pastor Jeff Christopherson presents his "kingdom matrix" at Epicenter. |
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Transformed leaders minister out of spiritual overflow

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| Nancy Ortberg, a church consultant from Menlo Park, Calif., talks to Texas Baptists about spiritual formation for leaders. |
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Transformed leaders minister

out of spiritual overflow

By Ken Camp

Managing Editor

DALLAS—Before church leaders can guide other people to be transformed by God, they first must submit to the “rhythm of life with God” that leads to their own ongoing transformation, a former teaching pastor at Willow Creek Community Church in suburban Chicago said.

“How you lead is reflective of your life with God,” said Nancy Ortberg, now a church consultant in Menlo Park, Calif.

Spiritual outsourcing not the answer, McNeal says

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| Reggie McNeal |
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Spiritual outsourcing not the answer,

McNeal says

By John Hall

Texas Baptist Communications

DALLAS—Christians have outsourced spiritual formation to the church, Reggie McNeal, leadership development director for the South Carolina Baptist Convention, told a Texas Baptist group. But if congregations don't change their strategy, they may end up out of business, he insisted.

Families have given congregations sole responsibility for developing children spiritually, and churches are doing an inadequate job of handling that responsibility, McNeal said.

Church leaders urged to trust and obey

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Church leaders urged to trust and obey

By John Hall

Texas Baptist Communications

WACO—Christians do not have to see where God is calling them; they

simply must trust him and obey, Robert Smith, preaching professor of Beeson Divinity School, told the Baptist General Convention of Texas-sponsored African American Leadership Workshop.

Around the State

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Around the State

- Baylor University will remember its founding and early days with the dedication of Baylor Park on Windmill Hill at 2 p.m. March 25 in Independence. Baylor Park stands at the site of the original Baylor University campus, before its move to Waco. The congregation of Liberty Church in Independence will host a barbecue lunch beginning at 11 a.m. Baylor President John Lilley will speak at the dedication, and will be joined by former presidents Bill Underwood and Herbert Reynolds. For more information, call (254) 710-1268.

- The third annual Yellow Rose luncheon, hosted by the Howard Payne University Woman's Club, will be held March 27 at 11:30 a.m. Millie Cooper, author of *Aerobics for Today's Woman*, will be the featured speaker. Her topic will be "The Joy of Living." During the event, the Yellow Rose Award will be presented to a woman in the community who exemplifies leadership and service and is a role model for students. The Yellow Rose Scholarship also will be presented to an HPU female student. Tickets are \$15 and may be purchased by calling (800) 950-8465. Reserva-

tions should be made by March 22.

First Church
in El Campo
recognized
Isabel
Rutherford
for 68 years
as a soprano
in the
church's
choir.

Reading a
resolution in
her honor
was Pastor
Rick DuBroc,
right. Also
present was
Music
Minister
Chris
Skinner, left.

A lifelong
resident of
El Campo,
she was
baptized at
First Baptist
in 1932. She
recalled that
in the choir's
early years,
women did
not wear
choir robes
but did wear
hats.

- A seminar on faith and healing will be held at Hendrick Medical Center in Abilene March 31 and April 1. Dale Matthews, author of *The Faith Factor: Proof of the Healing Power of Prayer*, will be the primary speaker. He will review findings from numerous scientific studies that demonstrate the effects of religious commitment upon health. Topics will include the healing power of prayer, biblical perspectives on faith and medicine, and reconciling physical and spiritual healing. Registration deadline is March 24. For more information, call (325) 670-2256.

Book reviews

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Book reviews

A Year With Dietrich Bonhoeffer Edited by Carla Barnhill,
(HarperSanFrancisco)

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was one of the authentic heroes of World War II.

A German Protestant theologian who spoke out fearlessly against Hitler and participated in an assassination plot against him, Bonhoeffer was hanged on Hitler's orders three weeks before the Nazi dictator committed suicide on the eve of Germany's surrender in April 1945.

Baptist Briefs

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Baptist Briefs

Three students charged with Alabama church fires. Law enforcement officials arrested three men March 8 in connection with a string of nine fires at Baptist churches in rural Alabama. A 10th fire, although ruled arson, has yet to be connected to the initial nine. Benjamin Nathan Moseley and Russell Lee Debusk, both 19-year-old students at Birmingham-Southern College, said they set the fires as a “joke,” authorities said. Moseley and Debusk appeared in federal court March 8 on charges of arson and conspiracy, according to the office of Alabama Gov. Bob Riley. Later that day, officials also arrested 20-year-old Matthew Lee Cloyd, a student at the University of Alabama in Birmingham. If convicted, the students could face a minimum sentence of five years for each church they burned, according to U.S. Attorney Alice Martin.

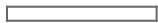
BJC offers essay contest for teens. The Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty has launched the 2006 Religious Liberty Essay Contest, seeking original compositions on the theme: “Why the separation of church and state is necessary to ensure religious liberty for all.” Open to all Baptist high school students in the classes of 2006 and 2007, the contest offers a grand prize of \$1,000 and airfare and lodging for two to Washington, D.C.

Second prize is \$500, and third prize is \$100. Winners will be announced in the summer of 2006 and will be featured in the BJC publication, Report from the Capital. The grand-prize winner also will be recognized Oct. 2 at the BJC board meeting in Washington, D.C. Essays should be 700 to 1,000 words. They will be judged on the depth of content and the skill with which they are written. Students should demonstrate a sound knowledge of the subject matter and support their assertions. For more information or to download a registration form and promotional flier, visit www.bjconline.org/contest/.

Cartoon

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“Good
news,
Pastor
Mike:
We’ll
publish
your
article
on
church
growth.
Bad
news:
We’re
putting
it on
the
humor
page.”

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.

BWA president offers global perspective on the church

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BWA president offers global perspective on the church

Baptist World Alliance President David Coffey recently spoke at several Texas Baptist churches, institutions and events as a part of his visit to the United States. Terri Jo Ryan, religion reporter for the *Waco Tribune-Herald*, interviewed him.

Q: What are some of the differences you've observed between Texas Baptist life and that in Great Britain?

A: I think the biggest difference is your Sunday school system. You have what is probably a core element of Baptist life in Texas—that is, the commitment to Sunday school. We don't have that. We've tried that, but it hasn't worked. I think there are lots more similarities, such as a commitment to local and global missions and your commitment to the fact that the world doesn't stop at the Texas border, that there is life beyond there.

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| Baptist World Alliance President David Coffey |
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DOWN HOME: A tornado, rain and a prairie set on fire

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DOWN HOME: A tornado, rain and a prairie set on fire

The radio announcer mispronounced Darrouzett (dare-uh-ZET), but he got all the others right—Booker, Follett, Lipscomb and Higgins.

And before he finished the list, I knew why he was reciting the names of every village in Lipscomb County: Grassfires.

Sure enough, local officials were thinking about evacuating the entire northeast corner of the Texas Panhandle. An incendiary mix of undiminished drought, unrelenting wind and unending prairie engulfed the county. And the flames threatened everything.

Most of his listeners never knew the announcer botched the pronunciation of Darrouzett. “Lipscomb County, where’s that?” they might have mused. Much closer to Oklahoma, New Mexico, Colorado and Kansas than to Dallas.

Cultural changes call for fresh expressions

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Cultural changes call for fresh expressions

By Ken Camp

Managing Editor

DALLAS—Cultural changes require God’s people to be open to fresh expressions of the gospel, Baptist World Alliance President David Coffey told a Texas Baptist conference.

“When there is a change in culture, that constitutes a fresh calling from the missionary God,” Coffey said at Epicenter, an event sponsored by the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

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| Baptist World Alliance President David Coffey |
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Chat rooms provide open window into students' world

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Chat rooms provide open window into students' world

By Greg Garrison

Religion News Service

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (RNS)—The three college students accused of setting fire to nine Alabama churches left a computer chat room trail that was a window into their personalities.