

Astros' Pettitte makes a pitch for sexual purity_40405

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Astros' Pettitte makes a pitch for sexual purity

By Shawn Hendricks

LifeWay Christian Resources

NASHVILLE—Houston Astros pitcher Andy Pettitte has played 10 seasons in the major leagues and knows all about the physical and emotional rigors of being a professional athlete. But, he said, living a life of spiritual integrity and sexual purity is just as challenging.

Purity pledges offer teens a counter-cultural alternative_40405

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Purity pledges offer teens a counter-cultural alternative

By David Briggs

Religion News Service

CLEVELAND—Luvirt Parker was 16 years old when he first pledged at a True Love Waits rally to remain a virgin until his wedding day.

Book Reviews_40405

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Book reviews

Evangelism in the Early Church by Michael Green (Eerdmans)

One of the most effective churches I have ever seen in evangelism was St. Aldate's Church in Oxford, England, when Michael Green was the pastor in the 1980s.

Green, who later taught at Regent College in Vancouver and then returned to his homeland to serve the Church of England in evangelism and missions, details here the key reasons Christianity spread so rapidly in its first centuries. While doing careful analysis, he never reduces this story to

technique. It is always about the will of God, the good news of the cross of Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit.



What are you reading that other Texas Baptists would find helpful? Send suggestions and reviews to books@baptiststandard.com.

Baptist Briefs_40405

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Journal focuses on the Baptist community. The Baptist History and Heritage Society recently released The Baptist Community, the society's winter 2005 journal issue. Baptist World Alliance General Secretary Denton Lotz wrote the introductory article, "Who and Where in the World are the Baptists?" Other articles address the history and work of the Hispanic Baptist Convention of Texas, Progressive National Baptists, Korean Baptists, Pentecostal Free Will Baptists and Seventh Day Baptists. To order the journal, e-mail pdurso@tnbaptist.org or call (800) 966-2278. The cost is \$8 plus shipping.

CBF offers sabbatical grants. The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship's Initiative for Ministerial Excellence is accepting applications for 45

sabbatical grants to be awarded in 2006. Pastors who have been in the same ministry setting for at least seven years are eligible to apply for the \$2,500 grants. The pastor's congregation must approve the sabbatical, which must be a minimum of four weeks. The sabbatical program is part of a \$1.9 million Lilly Endowment grant that also has created 56 peer learning networks and ministry residencies for recent seminary graduates. For more information, call (804) 379-0915.

GuideStone seeks needy retirees. GuideStone Financial Resources—formerly the Southern Baptist Annuity Board—wants to locate retired Southern Baptist workers, ministers or widows whose income is insufficient to meet their daily needs and offer assistance through its Adopt an Annuitant program. The program is open to retirees age 65 or older with 10 years or more paid Southern Baptist service who have income of less than \$1,250 per month for single applicants and less than \$1,665 per month for married applicants. Applicants also must have less than \$30,000 in assets, excluding their home. A widow or widower married at least 10 years to an individual who would have met the qualifications also is eligible to apply. Qualified individuals receive \$200 a month, and qualified couples receive \$265 a month. Depending on their situation, they may receive monthly support, a one-time grant or emergency assistance. For information, e-mail adopt@GuideStone.org, call (800) 262-0511, or visit the website at www.guidestone.org and select Adopt an Annuitant from the menu.

My Brother's Keeper shelter a haven for homeless in Waco_40405

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Burrell Steele (left), a volunteer at the My Brother's Keeper shelter, offers assistance. (Photos by Sarah Farris)

My Brother's Keeper shelter a haven for homeless in Waco

By Sarah Farris

Special to the Baptist Standard

WACO-A sign in Mission Waco office says: "If you're here for an

appointment, welcome. Otherwise, if you're sitting here, be ready to volunteer.”

Cartoon_40405

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“Before I call up God, what time is it in heaven?”
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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.

2nd Opinion: Baptists together

in Christ: 1905-2005_40405

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Baptists together in Christ: 1905-2005

By Denton Lotz

In this, the Baptist World Alliance's 100th year, we thank God for his awesome grace and providence that have guided us from 1905 to 2005. Ebenezer: "Thus far the Lord has helped us" (1 Samuel 7:12). Indeed, we can raise our Ebenezer, because for 100 years, the Lord has blessed the work of the Baptist World Alliance

In 1905 when the BWA was founded in London, optimism was in the air. This was going to be "The Christian Century." But alas, the guns of August soon destroyed this fantasy. Instead, these 100 years have been one of the most tumultuous times in world history. World Wars I and II doomed the so-called Christian West to extinction. No longer was the Christian faith the dominant theme of Europe. Even the European Union recently refused to acknowledge a Christian history as part of its new constitution!

Criswell Foundation dispute

ends in arbitration_40405

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Criswell Foundation dispute ends in arbitration

By Ken Camp

Managing Editor

After five years of legal wrangling, a three-member arbitration panel settled a dispute between the W.A. Criswell Foundation, Criswell College and a computer contractor by granting the Kerrville-based business a fraction of the multi-million dollar award its owner wanted.

Violence, suffering an ever-present reality in Western Sudan_40405

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Violence, suffering an ever-present reality in Western Sudan

By Chris Herlinger

Religion News Service

NYALA, Sudan (RNS)-War is not hard to find in Darfur.

**Darfur crisis fades from
headlines, but needs
continue_40405**

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Displaced
Sudanese
refugees await
water at a
camp on the
outskirts of
Zalengei in
western
Darfur. (Photos
by Chris
Herlinger/RNS)

Darfur crisis fades from headlines, but needs continue

By Chris Herlinger

Religion News Service

ZALENGEI, Sudan (RNS)—On a recent late afternoon, as Darfur's intense midday heat began to ease a bit and a small office proved a welcome respite from the glaring sun, a humanitarian official mused about the seeming quiet.

DOWN HOME: Who knew Tax Day is Thanksgiving_40405

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DOWN HOME: Who knew Tax Day is Thanksgiving?

This is one of the times of the year when I realize Joanna better out-live me.

If you're a normal person, you're probably scurrying around trying to finish your taxes on time. You're looking for old receipts, gathering bank statements, upgrading your tax-return software on your computer. Maybe you're looking up the phone number of the CPA in your church, the one with the older car and kids in public schools, the one who, rumor has it, doesn't charge too much.

You're doing whatever it is that people who file tax returns do in the last two weeks leading up to April 15.

EDITORIAL: Does suffering

have a true purpose?_40405

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EDITORIAL:

Does suffering have a true purpose?

Listen, and you'll hear the soundtrack of human existence—a chorus of sighs and groans synthesized by suffering.

That sounds pessimistic. Not so. Call it realism.

Since Adam and Eve bit the forbidden fruit, humanity has clasped hands over ears to shut out the wailing song of suffering. At times—notoriously during wars and amidst calamity—shared suffering of gargantuan proportions dominates societies, like an symphony reverberating off the walls of a concert hall. More often, suffering afflicts only a few people and occasionally floats past others, like blues wafting from an open window.