

# **DOWN HOME: A lesson learned while pulling weeds**

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## **DOWN HOME: A lesson learned while pulling weeds**

Every once in awhile, I stare face-to-face into the reality I have become someone very different than the little boy I used to be.

Of course, I'm still me. Yet the line of continuity between the boy I was and the man I am somehow unraveled along the way. I think it happened out in the yard.

When I was a kid, if you'd given me the option between pulling weeds or getting spanked by Daddy every day for a week, I would've bent over and grabbed my ankles.

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Back then, Baptists believed in spanking. Unfortunately, I got my share, probably because I was the oldest child. Oh, yeah, and probably because I had 'em coming. (However, I developed a theory that corporal punishment related proportionally to birth order. Maybe parents became more permissive with each new child. Or maybe their arms just wore out.)

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# **EDITORIAL: Reversal builds case for moratorium**

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## **EDITORIAL: Reversal builds case for moratorium**

Ironically, Thomas Clifford McGowan Jr. became a free man the same day the U.S. Supreme Court freed states to resume executions.

McGowan's case illustrates why Texas and other states should maintain a moratorium on capital punishment.

McGowan was a 26-year-old day laborer in 1985, when a 19-year-old rape victim picked his picture out of a police lineup. Tentative at first, when pressed for a decision by a police officer, the young woman said McGowan was the man who raped her.



So, McGowan went to prison for more than 22 years—almost half his life. This spring, DNA tests proved McGowan did not commit the crime. Judge Susan Hawk recommended McGowan go free, and he's out of jail while the

Texas Court of Criminal Appeals considers Hawk's decision. He became the 16th Dallas County inmate to be exonerated by DNA tests during the past seven years.

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# Faith Digest: Bible tops America's bookshelf

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## Faith Digest: Bible tops America's bookshelf

The Bible is the favorite book of all time for American adults, regardless of demographic group, according to a new 2008 Harris Interactive Poll. Researchers said it's rare to find such consensus among Americans, regardless of gender, education level, geographic location, race, ethnicity or age. Yet, more than 2,500 Americans who responded to an online poll agreed the Bible is their No. 1 favorite book. The poll also found political affiliation did not affect reading preference. Republicans, Democrats and Independents alike agreed on the Bible and Margaret Mitchell's *Gone With the Wind* as their top two favorite books. Other top five choices were *Lord of the Rings* by J.R.R. Tolkien, the Harry Potter series by J.K. Rowling and *The Stand* by Stephen King. Rounding out the top ten were *The Da Vinci Code* by Dan Brown, *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee, *Angels and Demons* by Dan Brown, *Atlas Shrugged* by Ayn Rand and *Catcher in the*

*Rye* by J.D. Salinger.

**Former bishop elected Paraguay president.** A former Roman Catholic bishop was elected president of Paraguay after being criticized by his church for running for the office. Fernando Lugo, 56, defeated the Colorado Party, which had reigned in the country 62 years. The Vatican opposes clergy members holding political office and had demanded that Lugo halt his political pursuits. Lugo said he resigned from the church and no longer must follow its laws. His five-year term begins Aug. 15.

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# Scholars cast critical eye on Graham's legacy

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## Scholars cast critical eye on Graham's legacy

**By Cecile S. Holmes**

*Religion News Service*

WASHINGTON (RNS)—Ecumenist, prophet, peacemaker. Friend of

presidents and queens. Evangelical powerbroker who was sometimes too closely tied to politicians. Each description applies to Billy Graham.

An official 1991 biography by William Martin called America's foremost evangelist a Prophet With Honor. The editors of a new book largely agree, but not without casting a more critical eye on Graham's remarkable career.

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*“He has maintained for six decades the same message, the same seemingly untroubled convictions, the same unblemished ethical record. In an age of anxiety, he calms the national soul.”*

**-Thomas G. Long,**

Professor at  
Emory's  
Candler  
School of  
Theology

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# Court dismisses Baptist church-state case

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## Court dismisses Baptist church-state case

**By Adelle M. Banks**

*Religion News Service*

WASHINGTON (RNS)—A federal court has dismissed a 10-year-old legal challenge brought by Kentucky taxpayers who questioned government funding of a Baptist social service agency.

The case involving Sunrise Children's Services, formerly known as Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children, initially centered on the dismissal of Alicia Pedreira, who the agency learned was a lesbian. In 2001, a federal judge in Louisville, Ky., dismissed her claims of religious discrimination.

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## Mission Lubbock fights hunger,

# delivers hope

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## Mission Lubbock fights hunger, delivers hope

**By Kaitlin Chapman**

*Texas Baptist Communications*

UBBOCK—When people think of Lubbock, they think of unending cotton fields, hearty dust storms, flat plains and Texas Tech football. Few think of people like Cheryl Tannery.

Tannery, who raised three boys as a single mom, is just one of thousands of people in the Lubbock area who have been stricken by poverty and experienced hunger firsthand. But Mission Lubbock has stepped in to help rebuild the lives of people in need by providing food, clothing and furniture and showing hope that only can come from Christ.

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Cheryl Tannery checks a list as she makes a food box for a family seeking assistance at Mission Lubbock.

Tannery, who has received assistance from Mission Lubbock herself, chose to give back to the mission by volunteering two days a week since last October. (Photo/Kaitlin Chapman)

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# **Missouri Baptist groups agree to peace committee**

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## **Missouri Baptist groups agree to peace committee**

**By Bill Webb**

*Word & Way*

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (ABP)—Seven members of rival groups in the Missouri Baptist Convention will go to mediation in an effort to bring about peace within the battle-torn statewide group.

The Missouri Baptist Convention Executive Board voted to create a peace committee that will submit to Christian mediation.

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## On the Move

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## On the Move

- **Martin Akins** to First Church in Bedford as pastor from First Church in Hobbs, N.M.
  - **Dan Baker** to First Church in Amarillo as minister of music from First Church in Saginaw.
  - **Patrick Berg** to First Church in Breckenridge as youth minister.
  - **Jamey Burrus** has resigned as pastor of West Texas Cowboy Church in Midland.
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# Key evangelical leaders endorse reconciliation

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## Key evangelical leaders endorse reconciliation

**By Adelle M. Banks**

*Religion News Service*

WASHINGTON (RNS)—Several prominent evangelical leaders have endorsed a “Reconciliation Referendum” that says Sen. Barack Obama’s recent address on race did not go far enough and pushes church leaders to speak up more about the need to address racism.

“Opinion leaders in the national media praised the speech as courageous, but the notion that simply more talk is needed will no longer suffice,” the statement said.

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## Most Americans believe sin

# **exists; they just can't agree which acts are sinful**

April 24, 2008

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## **Most Americans believe sin exists; they just can't agree which acts are sinful**

**By Adelle M. Banks**

*Religion News Service*

WASHINGTON (RNS)—The vast majority of Americans believe sin exists, but they differ on which behaviors are sinful, according to a new survey by Ellison Research.

The Phoenix-based marketing research company found 87 percent of Americans believe in the concept of sin. While most Americans think adultery is sinful (81 percent) and consider racism to be a sin (74 percent), far fewer Americans would put gambling (30 percent) or telling a “little white lie” (29 percent) in that category.

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# **Texas WMU celebrates Jesus during annual meeting**

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Newly elected  
officers of  
Woman's  
Missionary  
Union of  
Texas are  
(front row)  
First Vice  
President  
Suzy Wall  
(left) of Frio  
Baptist  
Church in  
Hereford and  
President  
Paula Jeser of  
First Baptist  
Church in El  
Paso, (back  
row, left to  
right)  
Recording  
Secretary  
Anna Zimmer  
of Kingwood  
Baptist  
Church in  
Kingwood,  
Second Vice  
President Jo  
Lee of First  
Baptist  
Church in San  
Antonio and  
Third Vice  
President  
Margery  
Flowers of  
Fellowship  
Baptist  
Church in  
Marble Falls.

# Texas WMU celebrates Jesus during annual meeting

**By John Hall**

*Texas Baptist Communications*

WACO—Woman's Missionary Union of Texas gathered to "Celebrate Jesus" during its annual meeting April 18-19.

In a meeting that featured seminars encouraging people to share their faith and be involved in mission work, testimonies from missionaries and sessions on prayer, leaders encouraged Texas Baptist women to celebrate Christ's work around the globe.

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## **BGCT      â Future      Focus Committeeâ named**

April 24, 2008  
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## **BGCT 'Future Focus Committee' named**

**By John Hall**

*Texas Baptist Communications*

DALLAS—A committee has been formed to study the long-range future of the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

Stephen Hatfield, pastor of First Baptist Church in Lewisville, and Andy Pittman, pastor of First Baptist Church in Lufkin, will jointly chair the committee.