

Christians must reclaim their good name, Ratliff urges Texas Baptists_22105

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Christians must reclaim their good name, Ratliff urges Texas Baptists

By Ferrell Foster

Texas Baptist Communications

AUSTIN—Christians have become the victims of identity theft in politics, as so-called conservative Christians espouse views that are “inconsistent with our Christian faith,” according to former Texas Lt. Gov. Bill Ratliff.

To evaluate Texas' taxes, follow the money, experts explain_22105

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To evaluate Texas' taxes, follow the money, experts explain

By Ferrell Foster

Texas Baptist Communications

AUSTIN-Where does the state get money for all the good things Texans might want their government to do?

2nd Opinion: How much sex before the promise?_22105

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COMMENTARY:

How much sex before the promise?

By Richard Ross

Almost every Sunday morning, I'm in a different pastor's office. Often the ministers gather for prayer before I preach.

Before we pray, here is what they often say: "Bro. Richard, we are just thrilled with what God has done through True Love Waits. What a powerful movement that literally has brought positive change to the U.S. and now to

the world.”

Cybercolumn by Berry D. Simpson: Find a way_22105

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CYBER COLUMN: Find a way

By Berry D. Simpson

C. S. Lewis wrote: “We often say, ‘I never expected to be a saint; I only wanted to be a decent, ordinary chap,’ and imagine when we say this we are being humble. Of course, we never wanted, and never asked, to be made into the sort of creatures (God) is going to make us into; the question is not what we intended ourselves to be, but what he intended us to be when he made us. We may be content to remain what we call ‘ordinary people,’ but he is determined to carry out a quite different plan.”

Berry D. Simpson

God uses a wide variety of methods to carry out his plans. For me, God works me over when I run. I believe he gives me dreams of training better and longer and faster, dreams of running another marathon (or even

further), so he can use that training process to mold me into his image. However, I don't think he really cares that much how well I run. I think he cares more that I learn patience and dependability and courage than whether I can run 20 miles at a stretch or lower my times for quarter-mile repeats at the track. He wants me to be like him, and he'll use running and backpacking, reading and journal-keeping (or as in Cyndi's case, dancing and performing and generally living on the edge), as tools in his hands to carry out his intentions. When I look back over my life, I can see how God has done exactly all that. I've learned deep lessons and felt surprising changes in my heart as a result of running day after day in the cold rain or blowing sand or 100-degree heat.

Doves look to Smith_22105

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Doves look to Smith

By Adelle M. Banks

Religion News Service

NASHVILLE (RNS)—Longtime Christian artist Michael W. Smith topped the field of nominations for the Dove Awards, which will be awarded by the Gospel Music Association in April.

Michael
W.
Smith

DOWN HOME: Knothole worthy 'Senior Dates' list_22105

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DOWN HOME: Knothole worthy: 'Senior Dates' list

Those folks down at the schoolhouse really know how to hurt a guy.

They didn't mean to do it, of course. They were just trying to be helpful when they sent a sheet of paper home with our youngest daughter, Molly, the other day.

When Molly's big sister, Lindsay, started kindergarten in 1989, I wondered about the sheets of paper they'd carry home through the years. I wondered what percentage of those important papers actually would arrive in our home.

EDITORIAL: What would Jesus put in the budget?_22105

February 18, 2005

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EDITORIAL: What would Jesus put in the budget?

A seminary professor once told a roomful of ministers-in-training: "A budget is the barometer of a church. Look at its budget, and you can tell where a church is going. You can see what it really values. You can determine its priorities."

He was correct, of course. And the principle applies to any institution, whether it's a family, a civic club, a state or a a nation. That's why Christians ought to pay close attention to the budgets being promoted by President Bush and Governor Perry. Those budgets don't simply reflect how we'll pave highways, pay for a war, fund education or finance Social Security. They say an awful lot about what kind of people we are.

Unfortunately, they say we're the kind of people who look at the bottom line of our checkbooks before we look into the anguished eyes of the abused, abandoned and neglected. Increasingly, we're the kind of people who are hoodwinked by the deceptions of special interests, not motivated by the common good. We're conned by the promises and platitudes of the wealthy elites but turn a deaf ear to the honest pleas of the working poor, our neighbors who serve us at almost every turn.



Most BGCT universities show spring enrollment gains_22105

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Most BGCT universities show spring enrollment gains

Most universities affiliated with the Baptist General Convention of Texas experienced higher enrollment this spring compared to last year:

Baptist University of the Americas broke its enrollment record for the fourth consecutive semester, with 208 students from 17 countries, up from 207 reported last year.

 Baylor University enrollment dropped to 12,715 students from 12,815 last year. The university attributed the drop to higher graduation rates and smaller class sizes the past two years.

Florida Baptists, others launch effort to pass state marriage amendment_22105

February 18, 2005

Posted: 2/18/05

Florida Baptists, others launch effort to pass state marriage amendment

By Robert Marus

Associated Baptist Press

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (ABP)—The Florida Baptist Convention is among a coalition of organizations that has announced a drive to amend the Florida Constitution to ban same-sex marriage.

Georgetown senior volunteers find warm welcome in West Africa_22105

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African
villagers'
natural
respect for
their elders
provided a
welcoming
context for a
mission
team of
senior
adults from
First Baptist
Church in
Georgetown.

Georgetown senior volunteers find warm welcome in West Africa

By Sue Sprenkle

International Mission Board

Women and children lined the footpaths throughout the West African village, each wearing their finest festive clothes and adornments. Warriors escorted their Texas Baptist visitors from the main road to this village made up of mud and stick homes.

Texans discover redemption in reality TV_22105

February 18, 2005

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Texans discover redemption in reality TV

By John Hall

Texas Baptist Communications

Jeff Johnson once thought reality television shows have no redeeming qualities.

Kingsville church focuses on lay-led ministry to serve community_22105

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Kingsville church focuses on lay-led ministry to serve community

By John Hall

Texas Baptist Communications

KINGSVILLE-Many Christians say Texas, with its estimated 10 million non-Christians, is a mission field. Iglesia Bautista Central is acting like it's serving in one.