

Houston pastor put on two-month leave after misconduct allegations_111003

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Houston pastor put on two-month leave after misconduct allegations

HOUSTON (BP)—The longtime pastor of a prominent Houston church has been given a two-month paid leave of absence from the pulpit following allegations he sexually assaulted a 37-year-old man.

The action to suspend Brentwood Baptist Church Pastor Joe Ratliff was taken Oct. 27 during a regularly scheduled business meeting. About 5,000 people attend the church every Sunday morning.

During the next two months, Ratliff will continue his administrative duties while other staff members provide ministerial leadership, according to a statement from the church. He will return to the pulpit Dec. 31.

Russian orphans ready for adoption_111003

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Russian orphans ready for adoption

Several children living in Russian orphanages are available for adoption by Christian families and singles through Buckner International Adoption Services. Among them are the children shown here, who recently were identified as adoptable by Russian authorities.

While Russian orphan children are identified as candidates for adoption, there is no guarantee that a specific child will remain available to Buckner for adoption for long.

Debbie Wynne, clinical director for Buckner International Adoption Services in Dallas, said adoption through Buckner is the result of “a positive relationship we have developed because of our humanitarian work in Russia. They know our heart for children.”

SBTC elects Osborne president and marks fifth anniversary in Corpus_111003

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SBTC elects Osborne president and marks fifth anniversary in Corpus

CORPUS CHRISTI (BP)-Chris Osborne, pastor of Central Baptist Church of Bryan, was elected president of the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention during the convention's fifth annual meeting.

A total of 831 messengers registered for the convention, representing 338 of the SBTC's 1,371 uniquely or dually affiliated congregations. The SBTC formed as a breakaway from the Baptist General Convention of Texas by a group desiring to be more closely aligned with the Southern Baptist Convention.

Osborne was nominated by Gil Lane, pastor of Paramount Baptist Church in Amarillo. Osborne, who served as Pastors' Conference president this year, succeeds George Harris, retired pastor of Castle Hills First Baptist Church in San Antonio.

SHARED SPACE: With six you get an eggroll_111003

November 7, 2003

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SHARED SPACE: With six you get an eggroll

By John Hall

Texas Baptist Communications

BEDFORD-Some congregations spend years trying to discern God's will. Leaders of Woodland Heights Baptist Church in Bedford believe God laid a vision in their hands.



Christopher
Sham,
pastor of
Bedford
Chinese
Baptist
Church,
and his
wife Alphra
pose with a
church
member
(far left)
and
Woodland
Heights
Baptist
Church
minister of
Education
Pat
McDanal.

Evangelistic skateboard video

finds unlikely host_111003

November 7, 2003

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Evangelistic skateboard video finds unlikely host

By Shelby Oppel

Religion News Service

PORTLAND, Ore. (RNS)—Stephen Baldwin stood under the east end of the Burnside Bridge, wearing an “Army of the Lord” T-shirt with camouflage pants and directing a Christian-themed DVD of skateboarders and BMX riders.

Did bishop slander by citing ‘spirit of Satan’?_111003

November 7, 2003

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Did bishop slander by citing 'spirit of

Satan'?

By Kevin Eckstrom

Religion News Service

WASHINGTON (RNS)—An Iowa judge will decide if the phrase “spirit of Satan” is basis for a slander suit after the U.S. Supreme Court declined to intervene in a dispute at a rural Iowa church.

Spiritual sleuth studies violent religions to fight crime_111003

November 7, 2003

Posted: 11/07/03

Spiritual sleuth studies violent religions to fight crime

By Sharon Schlegel

Religion News Service

TRENTON, N.J. (RNS)—Police were puzzled by the crime. A corpse had been disinterred in the cemetery, mutilated and left near a mausoleum covered with graffiti.

Small church grows strong leaders_111003

November 7, 2003

Posted: 11/07/03

Small church grows strong leaders

By George Henson

Staff Writer

KYLE-If it is true that leaders are born, not made, then the soil around Kyle is good for something other than cotton.

BGCT: Smaller Texas churches can grow_111003

November 7, 2003

Posted: 11/07/03

BGCT: Smaller Texas churches can grow

By John Hall

Texas Baptist Communications

Four of ten churches affiliated with the Baptist General Convention of Texas have fewer than 100 resident members, according to convention statistics.

Southern Seminary to close day-care center_111003

November 7, 2003

Posted: 11/07/03

Southern Seminary to close day-care center

By David Winfrey

Kentucky Western Recorder

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (ABP)—Citing a need for classroom space, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary officials have announced plans to close the school's Child Development Center.

Texas Tidbits_111003

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Texas Tidbits

✖ **Baylor names master teachers.** Two Baylor University professors—one living and one dead—have been named master teachers by President Robert Sloan. The master teacher designation is the highest honor granted to Baylor faculty members. Sloan bestowed the title on Ray Wilson II, professor of biology, and the late Helen Ligon, emeritus professor of information systems. These are the first master teacher designations granted during Sloan's nine-year presidency.

✖ **DBU invites prospective students.** Dallas Baptist University will host a Patriot Weekend preview for prospective students Nov. 14-15. High school juniors and seniors will experience campus life through informative seminars, interaction with students and faculty, sessions on financial aid and an inspirational concert by DBU's student ministry team, Glowing Heart. Cost for the weekend is \$25 and includes lodging, meals and a commemorative T-shirt. Call (214) 333-5360 or e-mail admiss@dbu.edu.

✖ **ETBU board elects officers.** D.M Edwards of Tyler has been elected chairman of the trustee board at East Texas Baptist University. He is a businessman and member of First Baptist Church of Tyler, where he is a deacon. He will serve with Vice Chairman Clint Davis, pastor of First Baptist Church in Mount Pleasant, and Secretary George Fitts, chief

financial officer for Carlile Companies and a deacon at Central Baptist Church in Marshall. Also elected to the board's executive committee are Tom Lyles, a certified public accountant from Lindale; Jo Marie Jones, retired teacher and a homemaker from Jasper; Ken Branam, pastor of Plymouth Park Baptist Church in Irving; and Harlan Hall, minister of music at Central Baptist Church of Carthage.

TOGETHER: Advance the kingdom of heaven_111003

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TOGETHER: Advance the kingdom of heaven

Clearly the theme of the kingdom of God was central to Jesus' gospel message: "Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. 'The time has come,' he said. 'The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news'" (Mark 1:14-15).

Perhaps you have heard your pastor say, "We must be about kingdom business," as you were urged on to a vision that was not centered on just what was good for your local church.

Can we be concrete about what the kingdom of God is? Note what any kingdom anywhere is. A kingdom is a territory that is under the rule of a

king. The kingdom operates where the king's rule is respected, his name is honored, his laws obeyed and his taxes paid. The lines on a map may say that an area of land is in the kingdom, but if in that province no one takes the word of the king seriously, then it is part of the kingdom in name, but not in reality.


CHARLES
WADE
Executive
Director
BGCT
Executive
Board