

Time in God's presence primary requirement for spiritual discipline

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Time in God's presence primary requirement for spiritual discipline

By Jim White

Religious Herald

ATLANTA—When it comes to spiritual discipline, simply spending time in God's presence is the primary requirement, seminary professors Linda Bryan and Loyd Allen agreed.

Bryan and Allen led a session titled "The Spirit of the Lord Upon Me" during the New Baptist Covenant gathering in Atlanta, Feb. 1.

Program enables watershed

experience for seminary students

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Program enables watershed experience for seminary students

By Bob Perkins

ATLANTA—A program endowed by a \$100,000 gift from Oklahoma Baptist Robert Stephenson has ensured that seminary students from around the nation could participate in the historic celebration of the New Baptist Covenant.

The Stephenson Seminary Scholars program helped underwrite the participation of 178 seminary students from 16 different divinity schools.

Bailey Nelson, the program's coordinator, said her involvement has been an inspiration.

• [See latest photos](#) and the latest [video clips](#) from the New Baptist Covenant Meeting. [\(And go here to see our complete coverage of the event\).](#)

“I am overwhelmed by the diversity of the group and the passion they show,” Nelson said. “They are driven and hungry. Their big question is: What’s next?”

Biblical witness commands

Godâ€™s people to â€™welcome the strangerâ€™

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Biblical witness commands God’s people to ‘welcome the stranger’

By Patricia Heys

Cooperative Baptist Fellowship

ATLANTA—Professors Daniel Carro and Richard Wilson drew on biblical examples as they discussed immigration issues at a special interest session “Welcoming the Stranger” Feb. 1 at the celebration of a New Baptist Covenant in Atlanta.

“Our question today is who is a stranger,” said Carro, as he showed the audience of more than 90 people a diverse array of faces. “If you can’t define who is a stranger, you can’t define who you should welcome. And friends, I presume that all of us are strangers. Each of us is a stranger to someone else. In the wrong place, in the wrong moment you become a stranger, refugee, alien, non-entity, intruder, immigrant, trespasser, [and an] outlander.”

Christians called to tear down walls, not build them, South Texas pastor says

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Christians called to tear down walls, not build them, South Texas pastor says

By Ken Camp

Managing Editor

ATLANTA—Christ came to tear down walls that divide people, a South Texas pastor told Baptists at a prophetic preaching conference. So, he asked, can Christians find any real security in a fence built along an “imaginary line” to separate two nations?

“Jesus didn’t come to build walls. He didn’t come to build fences. He came to tear them down,” said Ellis Orozco, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in McAllen.

Church security demands all hands on deck—**but maybe not with arms**

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Church security demands all hands on deck -but maybe not with arms

By Ken Camp

Managing Editor

FORT WORTH—Travis Avenue Baptist Church in Fort Worth has employed personnel to patrol its campus, escort women to their cars after dark and ensure buildings are locked since before Russ Hibner became the church's facilities manager seven years ago.

But after a security guard stopped a gunman who entered a Colorado Springs church in December, leaders at Travis Avenue Baptist decided to take another look at how it provides security.

What should worshippers do if their church is attacked?

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What should worshippers do if their church is attacked?

By Hannah Elliott

Associated Baptist Press

NEW YORK (ABP)—Last December, worshippers at a Colorado church lost two members to a murderous shooter. In 2006, a man entered an Oregon church and threw fuel during a Sunday service, intending to set the building ablaze. And in 2005, a man opened fire in a Wisconsin church, killing seven people and wounding four others.

In this day and age, even elementary schools are better prepared to deal with violent attacks than churches, experts say, because church-goers think it won't happen to them. But that false sense of security gives physical and psychological advantages to any would-be attacker.

The security of the believer: protecting churches from attack

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The security of the believer: protecting churches from attack

By Hannah Elliott

Associated Baptist Press

NEW YORK (ABP)—One day after a shooter killed two sisters at Colorado's New Life Church, Pastor Brady Boyd told reporters the church had become a target because of its size and its notoriety.

But the toll to the former church of Ted Haggard, the pastor accused of homosexual acts and drug abuse, could have been much worse, Boyd quickly added. The church security team quickly and effectively subdued the attacker, a 24-year-old man who ultimately was shot and killed in the attack.

A growing
number of
churches
are taking a
hard look at
providing
for the
security of
members
and guests.

**See
related
articles:**

- The security of the believer: Protecting churches from attack
- [Church security demands all hands on deck-but maybe not with arms](#)
- [What should worshippers do if their church is attacked?](#)

Baptists urged to reach out to

victims of sexual exploitation

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Baptists urged to reach out to victims of sexual exploitation

By Patricia Heys

CBF Communications

ATLANTA—Sexual exploitation is a worldwide issue, Luran Bethell told an audience at a special interest session of the Celebration of a New Baptist Covenant.

Bethell, an American Baptist Churches USA global ministry consultant, led a panel discussion on sexual exploitation Jan. 31, at the Georgia World Congress Center. Panelists included Lia Scholl, founder of Star Light Ministries, Inc.; Susan Omanson, of the NightLight ministry center in Thailand; and Charity Marquis, who started a branch of NightLight ministries in Los Angeles.

For Casting Crowns, performing

and recording music is just a side job

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Mark Hall, center, is the frontman for the Christian group Casting Crowns and a youth pastor at Eagle's Landing First Baptist Church in McDonough, Ga. All seven members of the band also work in full-time youth ministry. (RNS photo courtesy Song BMG Music Entertainment)

For Casting Crowns, performing and recording music is just a side job

By Adelle M. Banks

Religion News Service

FAIRFAX, Va.—On one night, youth pastor Mark Hall puts plans together for his Wednesday night youth service at Eagle's Landing First Baptist Church in the Atlanta suburb of McDonough, Ga. The next night, Hall is on stage in the Washington suburbs, fronting his Grammy-nominated band, Casting Crowns.

For Hall and other members of his group—all of them involved in youth ministry in Atlanta-area churches—middle-school and high-school students are top priority. It just happens they end up reaching them both on stage and off stage.

New book examines life and contributions of "Daddy King"

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New book examines life and contributions of 'Daddy King'

By Greg Trotter

Religion News Service

NEWFIELD, N.Y. (RNS)—Few dispute that Martin Luther King Jr.'s courageous leadership in the civil rights movement of the 1960s forever changed the course of American history. But even before he led the historic Montgomery bus boycott and other nonviolent protests, another King was pounding the pulpit and the pavement for social justice—his father, Martin Luther King Sr., known as “Daddy King” to his family, friends and members of his church.

Gurdon Brewster has decided to make Daddy King's story better known. Brewster's memoir, [*No Turning Back: My Summer With Daddy King*](#), recounts the months in 1961 he spent with the elder King and his wife, Alberta, in Atlanta.

Gurdon
Brewster
welcomes
Martin
Luther
King Sr.
to Cornell
University
in 1979.
Brewster
is the
author of
No
Turning
Back: My
Summer
With
Daddy
King.
(RNS
photo
courtesy
of Gurdon
Brewster)

VeggieTales creator's self-image: More Mr. Rogers than van Gogh

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The
VeggieTales
series' second
feature-length
film is *The
Pirates Who
Don't Do
Anything*.
(RNS photo
courtesy of
Big Idea)

VeggieTales creator's self-image: More Mr. Rogers than van Gogh

By Andrea Useem

Religion News Service

WASHINGTON (RNS)—*VeggieTales* co-creator Phil Vischer views the new feature-length movie, *The Pirates Who Don't Do Anything*, like a biblical parable.

It teaches about the Kingdom of God through an entertaining story—in this case, the tale of three bumbling vegetable friends who must band together and overcome their fears to save their friends.

Explore the Bible Series for February 10: Do you obey in faith?

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Explore the Bible Series for February 10

Do you obey in faith?

- Genesis 22:1-18

[By Donald Raney](#)

First Baptist Church, Petersburg

Years ago, a man was walking through the desert in Nevada when he came across an old abandoned store with a pump to a water well next to it. Upon approaching the pump, he noticed there was a note attached to the handle.