

On the Move

February 1, 2008

Posted: 2/01/08

On the Move

- **David Gruhn** to Trinity Church in Watseka, Ill., as pastor from First Church in Palacios.
 - **Matt Homeyer** to Fellowship Church in Marble Falls as pastor.
 - **James Lane** to First Church in Markham as pastor.
-

Blogger Burleson resigns from International Mission Board

February 1, 2008

Posted: 1/31/08

Blogger Burleson resigns from International Mission Board

By Hannah Elliott

Associated Baptist Press

GAINESVILLE, Fla. (ABP)— Wade Burleson, the pastor/blogger who railed against what he saw as an excessive narrowing of parameters within the Southern Baptist Convention, has resigned from his position as a trustee of the SBC's International Mission Board.

Burleson, pastor of Emmanuel Baptist Church in Enid, Okla., said he also plans to write a book "to tell everything that has not been told" about recent disputes in the denomination. He said he hopes to have it published before the SBC annual meeting in June.

RIGHT or WRONG? Win or reconcile?

February 1, 2008

Posted: 1/30/08

RIGHT or WRONG? Win or reconcile?

Years ago, I was taught church members should be able to work out their differences with patience and respect. Now, most Christians seem to prefer fighting and winning to reconciliation. This is about to drive me out of my church. What can I do to "hang in there" and make a difference?

Evangelism requires commitmentâeven if it means holding church under a tree

February 1, 2008

Posted: 1/30/08

Youth who have never fit in at church are drawn to Ron Evans' Church Under the Tree in a Plano park.

Evangelism requires commitment—even if it means holding church under a tree

By Loni Fancher

Texas Baptist Communications

ROCKWALL—Commitment is the key to a fruitful ministry, said Ron Evans. He should know. He's persistently followed God's calling to break through barriers and reach a group of disenfranchised young people as pastor of Plano's Church Under the Tree.

During Super Summer in 2006, the youth pastor of Brown Street Baptist Fellowship in Wylie felt God calling him to reach out to unchurched and disenfranchised youth.

Around the State

February 1, 2008

Posted: 1/30/08

Around the State

- **East Texas Baptist University** will hold "shadow days" Feb. 7-8 for high school seniors and college transfer students. The event offers visiting students an opportunity to attend classes, spend the night in the dorm,

socialize with current students and meet professors. Preregistration is required, and a \$15 fee must be paid. For more information, call (800) 804-3828.

- **The baseball team** of East Texas Baptist University will host a canned food drive Feb. 8 when it opens the season with a doubleheader against Jarvis Christian College at 4 p.m. All fans are asked to bring a minimum of two cans as their admission to the games. The drive will benefit local families.

- **Dallas Baptist University** will hold a preview for prospective students Feb. 9 from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Included is breakfast with current students, a Patriot rally and interaction with faculty members. Students also will tour the campus. Parents will learn about financial aid, campus life, parent services and the application process. A second preview is slated for April 26. For more information, call (214) 333-5360.

- **The University of Mary Hardin-Baylor's McLane Lecture** will be held Feb. 14 at 11 a.m. in the Lord Conference Center. Kirbyjon Caldwell, pastor of Windsor Village United Methodist Church in Houston, will be the guest speaker. Caldwell started the church in 1982 with 25 members, and today the 14,000-member church is the largest United Methodist church in the nation. The lecture is free and open to the public.

2nd Opinion: Political truth:

Rhetoric or conduct?

February 1, 2008

Posted: 1/30/08

2nd Opinion:

Political truth: Rhetoric or conduct?

By Randall Balmer

Eight years ago, when George W. Bush declared Jesus was his favorite philosopher, suppose someone had asked a follow-up question: "Mr. Bush, Jesus invited his followers to love their enemies and to turn the other cheek. How will that guide your foreign policy, especially in the event, say, of an attack on the United States?"

Or: "Gov. Bush, your favorite philosopher expressed concern for the tiniest sparrow. How will that sentiment be reflected in your administration's environmental policies?"

Or: "Jesus called his followers to care for 'the least of these.' How does that teaching inform your views on tax policy or welfare reform?"

DOWN HOME: Talk about your

gridiron miracle

February 1, 2008

Posted: 1/30/08

DOWN HOME:

Talk about your gridiron miracle

This season, the National Football League once again demonstrated an old adage passed down from generation unto generation: Football will break your heart.

Unless, inexplicably, you are a New England Patriots' fan (like my son-in-law, Aaron), or, even more incomprehensibly, you favor the New York Giants, you got your heart broken weeks—maybe even months—ago.

Well, that's not exactly true.

I haven't polled Houston Texans fans to see if they've suffered like all of us who root, root, root for the Dallas Cowboys. We were disturbed when the Cowboys lost their Mojo in December. And we were crushed when the despised Giants knocked them out of contention for the Super Bowl.

EDITORIAL: The BGCTâ€”s

opportunity for success

February 1, 2008

Posted: 1/30/08

EDITORIAL:

The BGCT's opportunity for success

Like few decisions in the past 100 years, the Baptist General Convention of Texas Executive Board must make a correct call on the election of its next executive director.



Although the BGCT is composed of about 5,500 churches, more than 100 associations, 27 agencies and institutions, and more than a million Baptist Christians, the executive director wields unparalleled influence in shaping the overall direction of the convention. That's because the Executive Board stands at the visible "center" of the BGCT. It supplies the connective tissue between Texas Baptist churches and the institutions and convention ministries. It provides most of the conventionwide promotion, receives and allocates the BGCT's Cooperative Program unified budget, and helps coordinate overall strategy and tactics for making an impact on our state, nation and the world with the gospel.

During the last few years, for a variety of reasons, the BGCT has been in a

funk. We have lost churches to a competing state convention. More tragically, churches have distanced themselves from our convention because of apathy and a sense the convention is irrelevant to them and to their ministries. Cooperative Program receipts have suffered. The Executive Board has endured rounds of staff cutbacks and reorganizations. Support for institutions has not been satisfactory. Attendance at vital events, such as the BGCT annual meeting, has been disappointing. Factions have pointed fingers of blame at each other. Morale has suffered, both in the Baptist Building and across the state.

The next person to occupy the executive director's chair—which became vacant Feb. 1—must restore a spirit of purpose and unity to our beloved BGCT. This will be more difficult and demanding than we can imagine. For one thing, the Cooperative Program is expected to decline, most likely necessitating further staff cutbacks and possibly curtailing institutional and missions/ministry support. These moves will bruise morale. For another, some aspects of factionalism have had time to set up and harden, so bringing our disparate constituencies back together will require patience, persistence and sacrificial, selfless integrity. The person who steps into that breach will feel as if he's being pressured and questioned from every direction, an excruciatingly lonely assignment.

Evangelism requires commitmentâ€”even if it means

holding church under a tree

February 1, 2008

Posted: 1/30/08

Youth
who
have
never
fit in at
church
are
drawn
to Ron
Evans'
Church
Under
a Tree
in a
Plano
park.

**Evangelism requires commitment-
even if it means holding church under
a tree**

By Loni Fancher

Texas Baptist Communications

ROCKWALL—Commitment is the key to a fruitful ministry, said Ron Evans. He should know. He's persistently followed God's calling to break through barriers and reach a group of disenfranchised young people as pastor of Plano's Church Under the Tree.

During Super Summer in 2006, the youth pastor of Brown Street Baptist Fellowship in Wylie felt God calling him to reach out to unchurched and disenfranchised youth.

Faith Digest

February 1, 2008

Posted: 1/30/08

Faith Digest

Catholic Charities study links poverty and racism. Poverty and race remain integrally linked in the United States, and continuing racism contributes to that linkage, according to a recently released study by [Catholic Charities](#). The study cites evidence the poverty rate for African-Americans in the U.S. is 24 percent—three times the rate for whites. Latinos and Native Americans also suffer from poverty rates above 20 percent. On average, white families are 10 times richer than minority families, the study says. And while white families' wealth grew 20 percent between 1998 and 2001, the net worth of African-American households decreased during that period. At the same time, "the ghosts of our legacy of racial inequality continue to haunt us," the study says, citing racial violence as well as discrimination in housing and health care. The study,

“Poverty and Racism: Overlapping Threats to the Common Good,” is part of Catholic Charities’ campaign to cut the U.S. poverty rate in half by 2020.

Creationists launch online journal. [Answers in Genesis](#), the Christian ministry that founded the \$27 million Creation Museum in Kentucky last year, has launched an online technical journal to publish studies consistent with its biblical views. The *Answers Research Journal* will disseminate research conducted by creationist theologians and scientists who follow a literal reading of the Creation account in Genesis. Ken Hamm, president of Answers in Genesis, said submissions will be peer-reviewed, but the journal’s guidelines discourage asking non-creationists to conduct those reviews. The journal is needed because of academic bias in most scientific journals against creationists, Hamm said.

Holy Land church leaders appeal for Gaza

February 1, 2008

Posted: 1/30/08

Sheikh Raed Salah
(center), head of
the Islamic
Movement in
northern Israel,
prays during a
protest against
Israel's blockade
of Gaza, at the
Erez crossing just
outside the
northern Gaza
Strip. Israel
recently resumed
fuel supplies to
the Gaza Strip's
main power plant,
offering limited
respite from a
blockade that
plunged much of
the Hamas-ruled
territory into
darkness and
touched off
international
protests.
(REUTERS/Ammar
Awad)

Holy Land church leaders appeal for Gaza

By Michele Chabin

Religion News Service

JERUSALEM (RNS)—Christian leaders from the Holy Land are demanding that Israel, President Bush and the world community “put an end to this suffering” of Gaza residents caught in the crossfire between Israel and the Hamas militants who rule the Gaza Strip.

“There is no time to waste when human life is endangered,” said the heads of the churches in Jerusalem and the Holy Land.

Some worry Habitat dispute might stall Katrina recovery

February 1, 2008

Posted: 1/30/08

Some worry Habitat dispute might stall Katrina recovery

By Bruce Nolan

Religion News Service

NEW ORLEANS (RNS)—A months-long effort by [Habitat for Humanity International](#) to retool relations with its 1,600 local affiliates has raised concerns in Habitat's operation in southern Louisiana, where volunteers have built more than 100 low-cost replacement homes since Hurricane Katrina.

The dispute recently surfaced when the San Antonio affiliate—the oldest in a far-flung Habitat organization—charged in federal court that Habitat for Humanity International sought to impose unprecedented controls on the local organizations.

Texan Alison
Cagle from
Clayborne
hammers a
nail while
working at a
Habitat for
Humanity site
in New
Orleans in this
2006 file
photo. Some
participants in
the rebuilding
effort in
southern
Louisiana fear
Habitat
International's
dispute with
its domestic
affiliates
could derail
the ongoing
Katrina
rebuilding
effort.