

Habitual Sin: Pastor's experience shows Christians can find freedom

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Habitual Sin: Pastor's experience shows Christians can find freedom

By George Henson

Staff Writer

JAYTON—For years, David Erik Jones worked hard to keep his sin hidden. But now it seems everyone knows—probably all 513 people living in Jayton. They know because he told them, and he wrote about it in his book—*My Struggle, Your Struggle: Breaking Free from Habitual Sin*.

“I can’t believe I’m actually talking about something that I worked so hard for so many years to keep hidden,” Jones said. But he hopes his confession will help other Christians confront their sin and discover hope in his story of deliverance from a longtime addiction to pornography.

Prayer heals honest Brit's legs but cannot cure bureaucracy with no 'miracle' button

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Prayer heals honest Brit's legs but cannot cure bureaucracy with no 'miracle' button

By Al Webb

Religion News Service

LONDON (RNS)—A British pastor's wife who claims the power of prayer cured her injuries was told her incapacity benefits could not be stopped because the government's computers didn't have a "miracle" button.

As a result, June Clarke of Plymouth, England, received more than \$7,000 she didn't even want—and she could not get the government to take it back.

Mayors' report says cities seeing more emergency food requests

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Mayors' report says cities seeing more emergency food requests

By Adelle M. Banks

Religion News Service

WASHINGTON (RNS)—A majority of U.S. cities participating in a recent survey have seen an increase in the number of requests for emergency food assistance, the U.S. Conference of Mayors reports.

The Washington-based conference recently issued its annual Hunger and Homelessness Survey, saying 16 of the 19 cities that responded to questions about hunger saw increases in requests for emergency food aid in the last year. In addition, an average of 17 percent of people seeking food assistance are not receiving it.

Lawaune
Stockton sits
with her cup in
front of a
downtown fast-
food restaurant
in Washington
and makes
about \$20 a day.
The U.S.
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Survey. (RNS
photo/Ann-Marie
VanTassell)

Texas Baptist Forum

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Texas Baptist Forum

Remove applause cause

I asked one of my students who was in a college singing ensemble how the summer tour went. He told of singing at a megachurch in the Midwest. The group thought they were to be the special feature at the Sunday morning service, only to find out they were to be squeezed in between the free china giveaway and the parachute drop.

- [Jump to online-only letters below](#)

Letters are welcomed. Send them to
marvknox@baptiststandard.com;
250 words maximum.



"Americans have tested that wall (of separation between church and state) in every possible way. We've run trucks up against it, we've thrown firecrackers at it, and the wall has stood pretty strongly. And it requires, I think, constant vigilance."

Jon Meacham

Newsweek editor (CBS News Sunday Morning)

"We find ourselves capable of worry, but I heard recently a great saying that I want to pass on to you: Control those things of which you have control and let go of everything else."

Roland Barlowe

Baptist minister affiliated with Marketplace Chaplains USA (RNS)

"He who does not know how to say 'no' to himself does not know how to say 'yes' to his neighbors."

Raniero Cantalamessa

Preacher to the papal household, speaking about how lust hurts both individuals and other people (Catholic News Service/ RNS)

Do you feel your church is moving in that direction? The solution to this

problem is simple. Here is a way to convert your church from an entertainment center to a worship center: Remove all elements in the Sunday morning service for which there is applause.

What remains are congregational singing, prayers, Scripture reading, responsive reading and sermon. I know it seems odd today to have only these things, but you will be amazed at what the Holy Spirit can do with them.

2007 a quiet year, but signs of change in the air

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2007 a quiet year, but signs of change in the air

By Kevin Eckstrom

Religion News Service

WASHINGTON (RNS)—History books are full of dates that mark seminal events: 1517, when Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses to the church door and launched the Protestant Reformation; or 1973, when the Supreme Court legalized abortion.

But boldface dates are preceded by less prominent but nonetheless decisive times: 1516, when a Dominican named Johann Tetzel led the sale of indulgences that deeply angered Luther; and 1970, when a young Texas woman named Norma McCorvey (Jane Roe) filed suit to obtain an abortion.

The Christian Coalition decided to sit out the 2008 presidential race.

On the move

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On the move

- **Bill Anderson** to First Church in Wichita Falls as interim pastor.
- **Vernon Andrews** to First Church in Waelder as pastor from Choate Church in Kenedy.
- **John Cox** has resigned as pastor of McMahan Church in Dale.
- **Kim Greer** to First Church in Oklahoma City as minister of music and

worship from First Church in Lewisville, where she was music minister/children, middle school and creative arts.

College students' spiritual interests increase; worship attendance drops

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College students' spiritual interests increase; worship attendance drops

By Adelle M. Banks

Religion News Service

LOS ANGELES (RNS)—Though college students' attendance at worship services declines, their interest in spiritual matters grows during their time on campus, a new UCLA study shows.

UCLA's Higher Education Research Institute compared the views of students who were freshmen in the fall of 2004 with the same students' thoughts in the spring of 2007, when they were juniors.

Texas Tidbits

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Texas Tidbits

Texas Acteens Panelists named. Two teenaged Texas Baptists—one from Garland and the other from Austin—have been named to the Texas Acteens Advisory Panel for the next year. Carrie Busha from Freeman Heights Baptist Church in Garland is a senior at Naaman Forest High School. Laura Herrera from Hyde Park Baptist Church in Austin is a senior at McCallum High School. Texas Acteens Panelists were selected on the basis of demonstrated commitment to ministry, missions awareness and servant leadership.



Carrie Busha



Laura Herrera

Wayland names mission center director. Veteran missionary Richard Shaw has been named director of the Wayland Baptist University Mission Center. Shaw will develop curriculum for the new center, as well as serve as an assistant professor of religion and dean of Wayland's Kenya campus.

Shaw's goal in developing the curriculum is to incorporate all disciplines of study into a mission emphasis. Shaw served 12 years with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship in Albania, Macedonia and Kosovo. He also worked with the United Nations, serving as a human rights advocate and working with women, children and people with HIV/AIDS. He and his wife, Martha, have two children living at home—Benjamin, 9, and Grace, 7. Their older daughter, Faith, is a student at Asbury Theological Seminary, and their son, James, recently graduated from Baylor University.

Clarification: Due to a pending vote in Congress, Rep. Chet Edwards was unable to attend the Baylor University commencement Dec. 15 to receive the Abner V. McCall Religious Liberty Award. Baylor will present the award to Edwards at a later date.

Religion writers name evangelicals in election as last year's top story

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By Adelle M. Banks

Religion News Service

WASHINGTON (RNS)—The nation's religion writers considered political grappling of evangelicals for a GOP presidential candidate the top religion story of 2007.

Members of the Religion Newswriters Association named their Top 10 list of religion stories for the year.

Book reviews

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Book reviews

[Flawed Families of the Bible: How God's Grace Works through Imperfect Relationships](#) by **David E. Garland and Diana R. Garland (Brazos Press)**

□

We frequently hear discouraging statistics about family life in the United States—failed marriages, sexual abuse, violence and chaos. We don't frequently hear reminders that the Bible, especially the Old Testament,

brims with stories of the same problems. Some of them make today's headlines look pale in comparison.

Diana and David Garland have provided a book that helps us face these stories and the issues they raise. Although the book makes a lot of guesses about what was going on in the minds of the biblical figures, it shines a reliable spotlight into dark corners that we need to see. The chapter on David and Bathsheba especially is eye-opening.

Off the Bookshelf
What's everyone reading anyway?

What are you reading that other Texas Baptists would find helpful? Send suggestions and reviews to books@baptiststandard.com.

When reading through the whole Bible for the first time, or for the first time in years, people often ask, "Why in the world is that in there?!" Now we have a wise guidebook to explain why and to show "how God's grace works through imperfect relationships."

EDITORIAL: BGCT in 2008: Purpose over pander

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EDITORIAL:

BGCT in '08: Purpose over pander

This will be a pivotal year for the Baptist General Convention of Texas. The outcome will turn on several factors, but none more important than this: We must focus on our historic purpose, not pander to self-interest.

The BGCT Constitution defines the “nature” of the convention straight-up: “This convention is and always shall remain, only and solely a medium through which Baptist churches shall work harmoniously in cooperation with each other, promoting the work and objects set forth in this constitution.” And what are those “objects”? “To awake and stimulate among the churches evangelism, missions, Christian education and benevolent work and enterprises; to cultivate a closer cooperation among the churches and promote harmony of feeling and concert of action in advancing all the interests of the Redeemer’s Kingdom.”



For generations, Baptists have set aside ego, turf and even minor theological differences to cooperate. We have done so based on this truth: We can do more together than we can alone. But I’m not sure we still believe it.

That’s because we mirror society, particularly the me-first Baby Boom generation, which idolizes the individual. From politics, to advertising, to

education, to about everything in-between, it's all about what "I" wants.

TOGETHER: Gospel means evangelism & ministry

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TOGETHER: Gospel means evangelism & ministry

I have sounded the twin notes of evangelism and ministry throughout my time as your executive director. I have done this because I am convinced both notes must be played in harmony if our churches are to have a full and healthy response to Christ's call to "follow me." The spiritual idea that drives me is that we have been called to be a Jesus kind of people and to build Jesus kind of churches.

Jesus came preaching the good news of God: "The time has come. The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news" (Mark 1:15). Sin has broken everyone and separated us from God, but God loves us so much that he doesn't want to spend eternity without us. He sent Jesus into the world to make sure we knew that. And the followers of Christ respond to that love and salvation by reaching out to others.



Executive Director
BGCT Executive
Board

Jesus also came demonstrating the heart of God and the will of God to the world. He spent time with the poor as well as the rich. He called those who have much to be generous in their attitudes and stewardship toward the needy. He demonstrated that people who love God also will love the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick and the prisoners (Matthew 4:23-24; 25:37-40; Luke 4:18-19).

These are not two gospels. There is only one gospel, and Jesus embodied all of it.