

Hispanic social conservatives may leave GOP over immigration stance

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Hispanic social conservatives may leave GOP over immigration stance

By Hannah Elliott

Associated Baptist Press

NEW YORK (ABP)—Republican presidential candidates who appeal to fears over immigration in the primary campaigns risk alienating an important constituency—conservative Hispanics—religious leaders in several early primary states said.

In a conference call with reporters, Hispanic evangelicals and other leaders urged candidates to “reject hateful speech” regarding immigration.

Bible Studies for Life Series for

January 13: Breakthrough in Forgiveness

December 27, 2007

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Bible Studies for Life Series for January 13

Breakthrough in Forgiveness

- Psalm 32

[By Steve Dominy](#)

Church welcomes the ‘Scum of the Earth’

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Church welcomes the ‘Scum of the Earth’

[**By Susie Oh**](#)

Religion News Service

DENVER (RNS)—The people who worship with Pastor Mike Sares are mostly young, many of them students, some clean-cut, some a little raggedy. More than a few of the 300 worshippers have grappled with depression, abortion, drugs and homelessness. Some still wrestle with their demons—and at this church, they talk openly about it. They call themselves Scum of the Earth.

Scum and similar churches around the country draw in young adults disenchanted with suburban megachurches and the denominational churches of their parents. But Sares, for seven years, has tapped into a group at the outermost edges. He fosters relationships with God and peers, makes church as accessible as possible and doesn't expect worshippers to change as soon as they come through the doors.

A free meal precedes services at Scum of the Earth in Denver, which attracts an eclectic crowd of artists, musicians, homeless people and others.
(RNS photos/Ernie Leyba)

Florida sanctuary gutted by early-morning fire before Christmas

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Florida sanctuary gutted by early-morning fire before Christmas

By **Greg Warner**

Associated Baptist Press

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (ABP)—The 50-year-old sanctuary of Hendricks Avenue Baptist Church in Jacksonville, Fla., was totally destroyed by fire two days before Christmas.

When the first of 70 firefighters arrived on the scene about 5 a.m. Sunday morning, flames were shooting out of the roof, an official said. Firefighters poured 300,000 gallons of water on the blaze before bringing it under control 90 minutes later.

Hendricks
Avenue
Baptist
Church in
Jacksonville,
Fla., burned
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before
Christmas.

Daehnert elected interim BGCT executive director

December 27, 2007

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Daehnert elected interim BGCT executive director

By Ken Camp

Managing Editor

Jan Daehnert, a retired Baptist Building employee who led the state convention's intentional interim pastor program several years, has been elected interim executive director for the Baptist General Convention of Texas Executive Board.

Board directors elected Daehnert by e-mail ballots Dec. 20-21. He will start work in mid-January, meeting with Executive Board staff. He will begin service as interim executive director when Charles Wade retires Jan. 31 and will continue in that role until a new executive director assumes duties.

Jan Daehnert

Cybercolumn by Berry D. Simpson: A gift

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CYBER COLUMN: A gift

By Berry Simpson

The story we were discussing was about Zechariah and Elizabeth, a Jewish couple who lived in the first century. Luke politely described them as “well along in years.” The Bible also says they were childless.

One day, Zechariah was selected from a list of 20,000 priests to offer incense in the holy of holies, a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. It was such serious work they tied a rope around a priest’s ankle so his body could be pulled back out if God struck him dead. (So much for job security!)

Berry D.
Simpson

According to the story, Zechariah saw an angel beside the altar while he was worshipping, and he was paralyzed by fear. The sudden appearance of anyone in the holy of holies would have been a shock, even more so the appearance of an angel. Who knew if seeing an angel were the first step toward being drug out by that rope?

The angel, no less than Gabriel himself, told Zechariah his prayers had been answered—he and Elizabeth would have a son named John who would lead the way for the Messiah.

Agency gives party for foster families who give year-round

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Agency gives party for foster families who give year-round

By Haley Smith

Baptist Child & Family Services

SAN ANTONIO—Baptist Child & Family Service threw a Christmas party to honor foster families who display the Christmas spirit of giving all year long.

After experiencing pregnancy complications, doctors advised Ernest and Margaret Casillas not to keep trying to have children, although they wanted a bigger family.

[REDACTED]

San Antonio-area foster children and parents celebrate at the Baptist Child & Family Services Christmas party with face painting, raffles and Mexican food. (BCFS photo by Martin Olivares)

Foster youth create own Christmas traditions

December 27, 2007

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By Haley Smith

Baptist Child & Family Services

SAN ANTONIO—Foster children seldom inherit family traditions.

That helps explain the growing success of the annual Christmas party for San Antonio, Kerrville and surrounding area youth involved with the Preparation for Adult Living (PAL) program of Baptist Child & Family Services.

Novelist Grisham joins New Baptist Covenant speakers lineup

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Novelist Grisham joins New Baptist Covenant speakers lineup

By Greg Warner

Associated Baptist Press

ATLANTA (ABP)—Best-selling author John Grisham, whose recent novels have revealed his deeply rooted Christian faith, will deliver a rare public speech at the New Baptist Covenant meeting in late January.

Grisham, a member of University Baptist Church in Charlottesville, Va., joins a lineup of Baptists who will address the three-day interracial meeting in Atlanta, including former presidents Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton, former Vice President Al Gore, and Republican senators Lindsey Graham (S.C.) and Charles Grassley (Iowa).

John
Grisham

“The Celebration of a New Baptist Covenant,” organized by Carter, will seek to unite an estimated 20 million Baptists Jan. 30 - Feb. 1 around an agenda of Christ-centered social ministry. Forty Baptist organizations in the United States and Canada are participating, including the four main black Baptist conventions and most of the other Baptist denominations except the Southern Baptist Convention.

Missouri leader who warned of Islamic takeover hired to aid

world-mission effort

December 27, 2007

Posted: 12/21/07

Missouri leader who warned of Islamic takeover hired to aid world-mission effort

RICHMOND, Va. (ABP)—David Clippard, the former Missouri Baptist Convention executive who earned national headlines when he said Islam has a plan to “conquer and occupy” the United States, was hired Dec. 10 by the Southern Baptist Convention’s world-missions agency to enlist Baptist churches to spread the gospel to non-Christians worldwide.

According to a news release from the International Mission Board, Clippard will serve as managing director of the IMB’s church services team. He will use his new position to enable all Southern Baptist churches to reach the world’s 6,000 unreached people groups, the release said. He is especially interested in involving young pastors in the outreach.

David
Clippard

Clippard won national attention in 2006 when he preached a sermon to the Missouri convention claiming the “real threat” to the United States is that “Islam has a strategic plan to conquer and occupy America.”

He claimed the Saudi Arabian government paid for 15,000 Muslim college students to come to North America to study and funded scores of Islamic study centers and mosques here with the intention of taking the continent

for Islam. "They are after our sons and daughters, our students," he said.

CBF to lease building from Mercer

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CBF to lease building from Mercer

ATLANTA (ABP)—The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship has signed a 10-year lease with Mercer University for offices previously occupied by the Georgia Baptist Convention.

The state convention recently moved to new headquarters in Atlanta's northern suburbs.

CBF will rent the offices—which are part of Mercer's Atlanta campus—in an agreement that solidifies the existing partnership between the two groups.

It also links CBF with other Baptist organizations that have moved or are moving into the facility.

Baptist outreach defuses Ebola fear in western Uganda

December 27, 2007

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Baptist outreach defuses Ebola fear in western Uganda

By Sue Sprenkle

International Mission Board

FORT PORTAL, Uganda (BP)—When the deadly Ebola virus began spreading in western Uganda, Southern Baptist missionaries and Baptist Global Response moved to respond.

Thirty-five people have died since the Ugandan Health Ministry documented a new strain of the virus. Although now apparently declining, the deadly hemorrhagic fever broke out in Uganda's Bundibugyo district in August, killing a number of people before tests confirmed it was Ebola Nov. 29.

(Centers
for
Disease
Control
and
Prevention
map)