

Texas Baptist Forum

May 23, 2008

None are 'innocent'

While I share your concern about the “innocent” being put to death ([April 28](#)), my Bible tells me no one is innocent and that the wages of sin is death.

So, since God gave us civil government and he gave the state the power of the sword, no one innocent in a theological sense ever dies under the death penalty.

I would go with a Dallas County-based (capital punishment) moratorium, since there is a real pattern under a couple of DAs that many innocent have been sent to jail.

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

Cleburne

Affirm innocence

Capital punishment is justified and affirms the value of innocent human life. The Supreme Court made the right decision.

For an insight into God’s perspective on this, turn to Exodus 21:12, Leviticus 24:17 or Ecclesiastes 3:3a.

Carrying out a condemned prisoner's death sentence is no more murder than locking him in jail is kidnapping. DNA is a great tool God allowed us to decipher in order to avoid mistakes.

Carol A. Setliff

Corpus Christi

Confidence lowered

I cannot think of a more cowardly, un-Christian manner to [terminate Nina Pinkston](#) (interim executive director of Texas Woman's Missionary Union) than to send her off on a retreat, which she had planned, and then for her to find out the retreat had been cancelled and she had been terminated.

This may have raised the morale of the staff in the Texas WMU office, but it certainly lowered my confidence in the present leadership.

As one who has known, loved and respected Nina Pinkston through the years, I am terribly disappointed. No wonder WMU is declining!

Whatever happened to compassion, courtesy and Christian statesmanship, not to mention communication?

Anne Mitchell

Mesquite

Joy & pain

It was with joy and deep pain that I read about the Baptist General

Convention of Texas' Future Focus Committee being named ([April 28](#)). The fact a group of Texas Baptist leaders will honestly look at our situation and offer changes does bring a little hope and joy.

The deep pain I felt comes when I look at who is not represented. The one organization that nearly every Texas Baptist is a member of is Sunday school. In our days past, it was these small groups of Texas Baptists who were given the task and challenge by Texas Baptist leaders to reach, teach and minister to every Texas Baptist possible. In the re-(dis)organization of the BGCT in our recent history, our Sunday School/Discipleship division has been consistently defunded and de-staffed. There is not one great Sunday school mind on this future list. Where are Dennis Parrott, Bernie Spooner or others who know the impact that Sunday school has made and can make?

Texas Baptist leaders' choices of late have shown that either they don't believe that Texas Baptists can reach their communities through small groups challenged and resourced to do so, or that they won't. There are examples all across our state where this is being proven wrong. Let's get Sunday school—or whatever a church's small groups are called—back to a prominent seat at the table and charge them with being key players in our future success.

Jeff Humphrey

Allen

Ministry families suffer

The outsourcing of what is left of the [counseling services](#) offered to Baptist General Convention of Texas ministry families is the last nail in the coffin of a vision the last administration mangled, manipulated, mutated and finally

murdered.

The task of ministry family health is not just connecting troubled families with competent counselors in their area. Ministry families are terribly resistant to counseling, unwilling to face problems, unable to handle family issues with confidence and confidentiality, and unable to afford appropriate services when they are needed.

Years ago, the BGCT recognized the hurdles and began the Ministers Counseling Service, which was as much informational and encouraging as it was referral and direct counseling.

This last administration naively believed that if you trained persons in being good leaders, they would be healthy persons with healthy families without family problems. What little they did was Dallas-based, and only a few benefited.

Now, we are back to the Dark Ages of ministry family care while we continue to hemorrhage families from the ministry.

Penny wise and pound foolish!

Michael R. Chancellor

Abilene

Lord's provision

I read with deep disappointment that the allocations for the 2008 Mary Hill Davis Offering for Texas Missions eliminate funding for the annual Special Friends camps. It saddens me that ministry to the most vulnerable—the least among us—is cut ... when challenges present tough decisions.

The majority of attendees to the Special Friends camps live on the meager Social Security benefits our society provides. Many of these wonderful adults who are active in my church receive \$5 a week in spending money. The balance of their benefits covers their housing, meals and other necessities.

My congregation, Alsbury Baptist Church, will now face a significantly larger cost in taking 30 or more adults who live with special needs to camp. Our commitment to the Special Friends camps remains high. The money will be available. I have yet to see the Lord fail in providing for these special individuals.

A convention that makes meaningful ministry the priority will always see the Lord's provision, while a convention that does not most likely will not.

Scott Sharman

Burleson

Wright not wrong

William Crittenden, identifying himself as a World War II veteran and 83 years old, is upset and offended by comments made by Jeremiah Wright ([April 14](#)). Crittenden says Wright's comments amount to treason. On the same page is a quote from former presidential candidate Mike Huckabee, who says he would have more of a chip on his shoulder than Wright if he were in his place.

I have often thought about the "greatest generation" and their service in WWII and their place in America after the war. As a combat vet myself (Vietnam), I regard their service highly. But what was their attitude toward the evil of segregation as they returned to civilian life? Were they

comfortable with the way their fellow vets, who happened to be black, were treated? Did they try to change things?

One of the greatest failings in this regard has been the churches and pastors of white churches. During the period after WWII, some pastors not only failed to speak out on civil rights, they actually promoted evil toward black people. Texas Pastor W.A. Criswell once said anyone who believed in integration was “dead from the neck up.”

Huckabee is correct. Many white folks would be as upset as Wright if we had been born a black person in America. I have seen actions I believed were treasonous in recent years, but Wright’s comments did not fit in that category.

Carl Hess

Ozark, Ala.

Why they’re leaving

Southern Baptist Convention President Frank Page [has predicted](#) the diminishment of Southern Baptists if dramatic change does not occur.

He ventured that the current loss of churches, money and interest was not the fault of convention personnel or of convention programs. The fault, he continued, lies with pastors who refuse to lead their churches in changing habits that are stagnated.

One cannot help but be aware that the SBC, once a meaningful and influential denomination, was wounded and today bears the scars of the last 20 years of political carnage that was led by convention leaders and many pastors who cared more for control and agendas, creeds and suspicion than for church growth.

The past two decades of aberrant Christian behavior, designed to remove all those who disagreed with convention contrivance, was shallow and devoid of Christian grace. It is not implausible to assume Baptist pastors and church members have lost any sense of program development and are levitating in the limbo of battlefield tactics that were far more political than pastoral.

Edward Clark

Danville, Ky.

What do you think? Because we believe in and affirm the Baptist doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, we value readers' opinions. Send letters to Editor Marv Knox by mail: P.O. Box 660267, Dallas 75266-0267; or by e-mail: marvknox@baptiststandard.com. Due to space considerations, letters must be no longer than 250 words.