

## Baptist church makes history by naming female senior pastor

WACO, Texas (AP) — Calvary Baptist Church members voted to hire a 37-year-old senior pastor who denominational officials believe is the first female ever named senior pastor in a Southern Baptist church in Texas.

Members voted, 190-73, to call the Rev. Julie Pennington-Russell Sunday after hearing her preach.

"It's exciting to be a part of this," said member C. Sam Smith. "I think it's historical. God is going to be glorified even more in this church than ever before."

Pennington-Russell is now senior pastor at Nineteenth Avenue Baptist Church in San Francisco — where Pennington-Russell said gender is a non-issue.

Not all members of Calvary, a traditional mainstream Baptist church, agree that a woman should be senior pastor.

Church member Rick Scott said he and his wife will have to do some serious soul searching about staying at Calvary.

"I just don't feel that biblically a precedent has been set for a woman

to be a senior pastor in a church," he said.

Scott said the vote will prove divisive even though Pennington-Russell was praised for her preaching and pastoral care skills.

"You're going to see a little bit of a shake-out, a pruning I've heard it called," Scott said Sunday afternoon.

Pennington-Russell said although the congregational vote for her was lower than the 90 percent gauge used by many male pastors when considering a position, it will not stop her from accepting the job.

"The 70 percent was really right in the ballpark of what we thought because it's so new," she said.

Approximately 90 Southern Baptist women are serving as senior pastors or co-pastors nationwide with fewer than 1,300 women ordained in Southern Baptist Convention churches, said a Southern Baptist ministry historian, Sarah Frances Anders.

The new senior pastor replaces the Rev. Ken Massey, who left Calvary last summer.

## El Niño New radios sought for better weather alert

DALLAS (AP) — El Niño-fueled demand for latest-generation weather radios that alert listeners to tornado, hurricane and other warnings has caused a nationwide shortage of the devices.

After the first deadly twisters hit Florida, Texas-based Radio Shack went through a year's inventory in just weeks and has had to reorder from an overseas manufacturer.

"The El Niño effect wreaked havoc not only with trying to forecast the weather, but also for us to predict what the demand is for these radios," Rick Borinstein, Radio Shack senior vice president of merchandising, said.

"We have had a run on weather alert radios since February of this year when the first tornadoes hit Florida."

The National Weather Service said other tornadoes this year in Alabama, Georgia and Tennessee helped fuel the run.

"We are pleased there was demand that has increased," said Skip Ely, National Weather Service chief meteorologist in Fort Worth. "About 10 years ago, the service was underutilized. Not that many people listened to weather radios."

The radios are made to receive FM broadcasts of forecasts, watches, warnings and general weather information from the nearest National Weather Service transmitting station.

They also can be set to sound an alarm when the weather service issues a severe weather watch or warning, such as a tornado warning. Then, a loud tone is followed by the alert broadcast.

Ely said his mother, who lives in Florida, bought one of the radios after killer tornadoes swept through the state's central

section in February while many people slept.

"She got one of the last ones," he said.

Tony Magoulas, spokesman for Fort Worth, Texas, Tandy Corp., parent company of Radio Shack stores, company anticipated sales would be brisk for the radios.

But he would not say how many radios had been sold. "We are now air shipping more of them from where they are built to our specifications," said Magoulas.

"We are trying to get them in stock. We anticipate in 30 to 60 days, we will be back in flush inventory across the country."

El Niño, the intense warming of the Pacific Ocean in America, has shifted south the jet stream's winter bringing floods to southern California and tornadoes and heavy rains to Florida.

That's the kind of situation the radios were designed for, said Nathan McCollum of the Indian River County Department of Emergency Services.

"The people who were in Central Florida in February about 10 to 12 minutes warning if they had their radios, had their structures collapsing."

Nate Hunt, manager of a Radio Shack store in Florida, said he had them for about two months now.

Sales in other parts of the country have been hot. "I had heard the same thing in Alabama and even in Texas," said Ely. "There has been an increase in demand."

## City councilman seeks denouncement of 'Waco Horror'

WACO, Texas (AP) — A councilman wants Waco to officially denounce the 1916 lynching of an African-American man who was hanged over a bonfire and mutilated on the City Hall lawn after his conviction in the murder of a white woman.

Five-term councilman Lawrence Johnson told fellow council members that the lynching, known as the "Waco Horror," remains a blot on city history.

Johnson said Waco should draft a statement denouncing the incident and proclaiming a commitment to racial harmony, and he'd like to see a plaque placed on City Hall grounds.

"I would like something to show that even though it took 80 years, we've ac-

knowledged it, and that we're past that now," he told the *Waco Tribune-Herald* for a story in Sunday's editions.

According to newspaper accounts of the time, Jesse Washington, 17, was a field hand on the farm of George and Lucy Fryer.

Washington confessed and later apologized in court for the slaying of Fryer's wife, 53, whose body was found in a cottonseed shed, the reports said.

In a one-day trial, Washington was convicted and sentenced to hang by a jury that deliberated in five minutes. Court spectators then surged forward and seized the defendant, dragging him to an alley behind the courthouse.

There, according to the reports, Wash-

ington was attacked with bricks, knives, clubs and shovels, stripped and taken to the front lawn of City Hall, where another mob had built a bonfire beneath a hanging tree.

A crowd of 15,000, including the mayor and police chief, were said to have watched as the man was doused with coal oil, hanged and lowered into the bonfire. Onlookers cut off body parts to keep as souvenirs.

Washington's charred remains were put in a bag and hung from a telephone pole, the reports said.

The May 1916 incident was not Waco's first or last racially motivated lynching nor was it unusual among thousands of lynchings in the South be-

tween the Civil War and World War II.

But the incident brought national attention at the time, and the NAACP used it in a pitch for a federal anti-lynching law that eventually passed in 1921.

Johnson, a Waco native and president of the local National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, said he hadn't heard of the 1916 lynching until he visited the National Civil Rights Museum in Memphis two years ago.

There he saw a picture of the burned and disfigured corpse dangling from a tree and surrounded by a grinning white men.

"What brought it home to me is that it happened on the lawn of City Hall," he said. "It became to me an act that was dif-

ferent from other lynchings of the time."

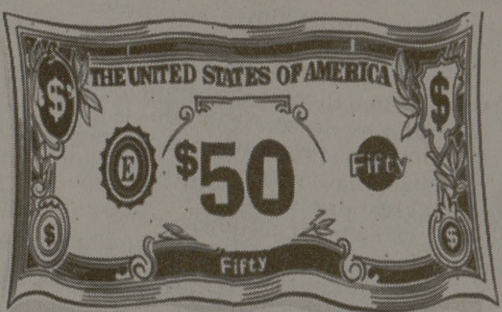
"There are indications that officials were watching it happen and nothing to stop it. I thought it was we did something to purge that to gain a sense of atonement."

Councilwoman Linda Ethridge said she would like to hear a specific statement from Johnson and would like to discuss it with council members.

"It will raise an interesting question with history? We like to talk about good things in our history, but we like to talk about the kind of discussion and remembering is appropriate for things that are shameful in history?"



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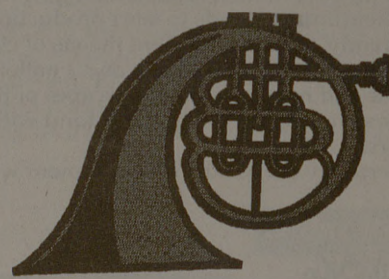


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