

# **Southern Baptist leaders reject ecumenical invitation\_12405**

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## **Southern Baptists leaders reject ecumenical invitation**

**By Kevin Eckstrom**

*Religion New Service*

WASHINGTON (RNS)-The Southern Baptist Convention has told organizers of Christian Churches Together in the USA it has no interest in joining the fledgling ecumenical organization.

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## **‘Birds & bees’ talk should be ongoing conversation\_12405**

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# 'Birds & bees' talk should be ongoing conversation

By **Michele Melendez**

*Religion News Service*

WASHINGTON (RNS)-Bob Pastorio remembers feeling woozy when his children sprang out-of-nowhere questions related to sex. Even so, he said, he always answered honestly.

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## **Switchfoot's success signals new trend in Christian music\_12405**

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Switchfoot
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## **Switchfoot's success signals new trend in Christian music**

By Erin Curry

*Baptist Press*

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—The popularity of Christian rock groups such as Switchfoot, MercyMe and Casting Crowns has signaled a growing trend for the gospel music industry, which reported a sales total of 43.4 million units in 2004.

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## Texas Tidbits\_12405

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### Texas Tidbits

**African-American Leadership Conference planned.** The development of lay leaders in churches is the focus of an African-American Leadership Conference March 11-12 in Waco. George McCalep Jr., pastor of Greenforest Community Baptist Church in Decatur, Ga., will be the keynote speaker at the conference, sponsored by the Baptist General Convention of Texas. Participants will spend most of the conference time in groups for 11 specific types of ministry—church administration for general church leadership; Christian education; Sunday school and small-group directors; and women, deacon, music, adult, youth, children, preschool and technology ministries. Cost is \$45, which includes lunch. Registration is required, and the conference will be limited to 500 participants. For more information, contact Andre Punch in the BGCT Bible Study/Disciple-ship Center at (214) 828-5281 or [andre.punch@bgct.org](mailto:andre.punch@bgct.org).

**Four Texans named "Baptists of the Year."** The Baptist Center for Ethics' website, ethicsdaily.com, named four Texans among its Baptists of the year for 2004—Charlie Johnson, pastor of Trinity Baptist Church in San Antonio, which is converting a 55,000-square-foot grocery store building into a smoke- and alcohol-free entertainment center for young people; Albert Reyes, president of the Baptist University of the Americas in San Antonio and president of the Baptist General Convention of Texas; Suzii Paynter, public policy director of the BGCT's Christian Life Commission in Austin; and Mary Blye Howe, a member of Wilshire Baptist Church in Dallas, honored for her writing on interfaith relations.

**HBU names first female trustee chair.** Diane Williams has been appointed chair of the Houston Baptist University board of trustees. Williams, a member of Second Baptist Church in Houston, is the first woman to hold the position. She is a 1993 HBU graduate and has served on the board seven years.

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**TOGETHER: 'A place where  
people are being saved\_12405**

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**TOGETHER:**

# 'A place where people are being saved'

The dear elderly lady in Frederick Speakman's *The Salty Tang* asked the question that should be the measure for every church.

She was a tourist in an English cathedral, where the guide had pointed out the artistic beauty, the architectural accomplishments and the burial sites of important benefactors. Finally, she interrupted, “Young man, young man, when was the last time someone was saved in here?”

Texas Baptists have beautiful church buildings, youth and children's ministries of the highest order, giving patterns that others envy, growing numbers of church starts, disaster response teams that lead the way, and dedicated pastors, staff members and laity. But for us, too, the question that cuts through all the noise of our activity must be, “Has anybody been saved here lately?”


Executive Director BGCT Executive Board

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## Broken lives touch hearts of

# relief team\_12405

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Physician Andrew Bentley (left) from Breckenridge Village in Tyler-with the help of a volunteer with Texas Baptist Men-removes a stick imbedded in a Sri Lankan man's foot. (Photo by Richard Brake)	Sri Lankan children-even in a Muslim camp-eagerly greeted the Texas team.
 Relief workers from Texas approach a man on a bicycle who was despondent after the loss of his family in the tsunami.	

# **Broken lives touch hearts of relief team**

**By Craig Bird**

*Baptist Child & Family Services*

SAN ANTONIO-The physical devastation was staggering. Fishing boats hurled over a peninsula and across a quarter-mile-wide lagoon before being dumped on the mainland. Piles of rubble where houses and office buildings once stood. Water wells contaminated with saltwater. Coastline beaches vanished. Bridges shattered.

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# **Agency develops foster care program for hurting Sri Lanka\_12405**

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# **Agency develops foster care program for hurting Sri Lanka**

**By Craig Bird**

*Baptist Child & Family Services*

SAN ANTONIO—Success in Moldova led to Baptist Child & Family Services to become the lead agency in developing a foster care and kinship care program in Sri Lanka.

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## **Texas Baptists give to tsunami relief\_12405**

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### **Texas Baptists give to tsunami relief**

**By John Hall**

*Texas Baptist Communications*

Texas Baptists are pouring their hearts and pocketbooks into disaster relief efforts in South Asia.

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## **Damage 'horrific' in Indonesia,**

# **pastor says\_12405**

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## **Damage 'horrific' in Indonesia, pastor says**

**By John Hall**

*Texas Baptist Communications*

BANDA ACEH, Indonesia-Images do not adequately depict the “horrific” devastation in Indonesia, reported a Keller pastor who is exploring ways to minister in South Asia.

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## **TBM volunteers offer relief in Sri Lanka\_12405**

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Bill Gresso  
(left) of  
Northlake  
Baptist  
Church in  
Garland  
and Dick  
Talley,  
logistics  
coordinator  
for Texas  
Baptist  
Men, test a  
well on the  
east coast  
of Sri  
Lanka near  
Batticoloa.  
(Photo by  
Rex  
Campbell)

## **TBM volunteers offer relief in Sri Lanka**

**By John Hall**

*Texas Baptist Communications*

BATTICOLOA, Sri Lanka—God's Spirit is washing over areas of Sri Lanka that were worst hit by the tsunamis, revealing a changed topographical and

spiritual terrain, a missionary in Sri Lanka observed.

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# Theologian offers key to understanding U2's 'Atomic Bomb'\_12405

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## Theologian offers key to understanding U2's 'Atomic Bomb'

**By Steven Harmon**

I recently did something many folks might not expect a minister and theologian to do. I drove to the nearest music store and bought the latest CD by the world's most popular rock group-U2's *How to Dismantle an Atomic Bomb*-on its release day.

In the early 1980s, I-along with many other Christian young people-started listening to the music of this up-and-coming band from Dublin, Ireland. We were attracted to the overtones of Christian spirituality and the prophetic passion for social justice around the world that pervaded their music.



# **LifeWay Explore the Bible Series for Jan. 30: Jesus Christ is the capstone of his church \_12405**

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**LifeWay Explore the Bible Series for Jan. 30**

## **Jesus Christ is the capstone of his church**

Luke 20:8-19

**By Pakon Chan**

*Chinese Baptist Church, Arlington*