

Evangelism requires commitment— even if it means holding church under a tree

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Youth
who
have
never
fit in at
church
are
drawn
to Ron
Evans'
Church
Under
a Tree
in a
Plano
park.

**Evangelism requires commitment-
even if it means holding church under**

a tree

By Loni Fancher

Texas Baptist Communications

ROCKWALL—Commitment is the key to a fruitful ministry, said Ron Evans. He should know. He's persistently followed God's calling to break through barriers and reach a group of disenfranchised young people as pastor of Plano's Church Under the Tree.

During Super Summer in 2006, the youth pastor of Brown Street Baptist Fellowship in Wylie felt God calling him to reach out to unchurched and disenfranchised youth.

Faith Digest

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Faith Digest

Catholic Charities study links poverty and racism. Poverty and race remain integrally linked in the United States, and continuing racism contributes to that linkage, according to a recently released study by [Catholic Charities](#). The study cites evidence the poverty rate for African-Americans in the U.S. is 24 percent—three times the rate for whites. Latinos and Native Americans also suffer from poverty rates above 20

percent. On average, white families are 10 times richer than minority families, the study says. And while white families' wealth grew 20 percent between 1998 and 2001, the net worth of African-American households decreased during that period. At the same time, "the ghosts of our legacy of racial inequality continue to haunt us," the study says, citing racial violence as well as discrimination in housing and health care. The study, "Poverty and Racism: Overlapping Threats to the Common Good," is part of Catholic Charities' campaign to cut the U.S. poverty rate in half by 2020.

Creationists launch online journal. [Answers in Genesis](#), the Christian ministry that founded the \$27 million Creation Museum in Kentucky last year, has launched an online technical journal to publish studies consistent with its biblical views. The *Answers Research Journal* will disseminate research conducted by creationist theologians and scientists who follow a literal reading of the Creation account in Genesis. Ken Hamm, president of Answers in Genesis, said submissions will be peer-reviewed, but the journal's guidelines discourage asking non-creationists to conduct those reviews. The journal is needed because of academic bias in most scientific journals against creationists, Hamm said.

Holy Land church leaders

appeal for Gaza

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Sheikh Raed Salah
(center), head of
the Islamic
Movement in
northern Israel,
prays during a
protest against
Israel's blockade
of Gaza, at the
Erez crossing just
outside the
northern Gaza
Strip. Israel
recently resumed
fuel supplies to
the Gaza Strip's
main power plant,
offering limited
respite from a
blockade that
plunged much of
the Hamas-ruled
territory into
darkness and
touched off
international
protests.
(REUTERS/Ammar
Awad)

Holy Land church leaders appeal for Gaza

By Michele Chabin

Religion News Service

JERUSALEM (RNS)—Christian leaders from the Holy Land are demanding that Israel, President Bush and the world community “put an end to this suffering” of Gaza residents caught in the crossfire between Israel and the Hamas militants who rule the Gaza Strip.

“There is no time to waste when human life is endangered,” said the heads of the churches in Jerusalem and the Holy Land.

Some worry Habitat dispute might stall Katrina recovery

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Some worry Habitat dispute might stall Katrina recovery

By Bruce Nolan

Religion News Service

NEW ORLEANS (RNS)—A months-long effort by [Habitat for Humanity International](#) to retool relations with its 1,600 local affiliates has raised concerns in Habitat's operation in southern Louisiana, where volunteers have built more than 100 low-cost replacement homes since Hurricane Katrina.

The dispute recently surfaced when the San Antonio affiliate—the oldest in a far-flung Habitat organization—charged in federal court that Habitat for Humanity International sought to impose unprecedented controls on the local organizations.

Texan Alison
Cagle from
Clayborne
hammers a
nail while
working at a
Habitat for
Humanity site
in New
Orleans in this
2006 file
photo. Some
participants in
the rebuilding
effort in
southern
Louisiana fear
Habitat
International's
dispute with
its domestic
affiliates
could derail
the ongoing
Katrina
rebuilding
effort.

HBU breaks ground for academic center

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HBU breaks ground for academic center

Houston Baptist University recently broke ground for its university academic center. The center will house the art department, the communications department and the HBU Honors College.

The student newspaper, *The Collegian*, and the mock trial team will be headquartered in the new facility. Pictured are (left to right) Dan Woo, president of Mission Constructors; Trustee Jack Carlson; Vice President Emeritus Don Looser; HBU President Robert Sloan; John Rhebergen, vice president of Gossen Livingston Associates and project architect; Brad Durkin of Churchworx; HBU trustee board Chairman Rick Bailey; and Trustee David Stutts.

Providential communication failure led student to DBU and faith in Christ

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Mamo
Ishida,
acting
director of
the master of
education in
higher
education
program at
Dallas
Baptist
University,
visits with
international
students at
the North
Texas
school. He
served
several years
as assistant
director of
the
international
students
program,
and next fall
he will head
the school's
new program
in East Asian
studies.

Providential communication failure led student to DBU and faith in Christ

By George Henson

Staff Writer

DALLAS—God must have a sense of humor.

Mamo Ishida believes God used his desire to stay away from a Christian university to bring him to Dallas Baptist University—because he “didn’t know what ‘Baptist’ meant.” More importantly, Ishida found a saving faith in Jesus Christ that he now shares with other students from around the world.

Islam not source of Middle Eastern conflicts, former CIA official insists

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Islam not source of Middle Eastern

conflicts, former CIA official insists

By Douglas Todd

Religion News Service

VANCOUVER, British Columbia (RNS)—Angry, violent reformers and terrorists would have arisen out of the Middle East whether Islam had been born or not, a former top CIA official has written.

“A world without Islam would still see most of the enduring bloody rivalries whose wars and tribulations dominate the geopolitical landscape,” Graham Fuller, the CIA’s former head of long-term strategic planning, writes in the cover story of this month’s issue of *Foreign Policy* magazine.

Youth speaker wants to point students to real catalyst for change

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Youth speaker wants to point

students to real catalyst for change

By Leann Callaway

Special to the Baptist Standard

SAN ANGELO—"Change" may be the buzzword of the moment among presidential candidates, but youth communicator Kevin Kirkland has spent the last five years telling students, "Jesus Christ is the only catalyst that exists for change in a lost world."

Before he established an itinerant ministry in 2003, Kirkland served as a student minister. During that time, he sensed God calling him to develop a ministry that taps into young people's desire to make a difference.

Kevin Kirkland

Texas Baptist Forum

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Texas Baptist Forum

Applause & 'amen'

Applause has become the modern equivalent of "amen" ([Jan. 7](#)). Surely any spontaneous show of appreciation in praise of the Lord and/or his

handiwork would be a welcome “noise” to God.

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

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



"Ultimately, it is Muslims who must excise the scourge of radicalism from Islam. From within. We can help by behaving like the generous, just and benevolent society moderate Muslims once considered us to be."

Oliver "Buzz" Thomas

Minister and lawyer, commenting on hopes for bridging religious divides (USA Today/RNS)

"I'm going to stick to the things that make it critical for me to be president of the United States. I have deep convictions about who goes (to heaven) and who doesn't, but as far as who makes that decision, it isn't me; it's God. I'm going to leave that up to him."

Mike Huckabee

Presidential candidate, deflecting reporters' questions about whether non-Christians can enter heaven (Associated Press/RNS)

"I ask in the name of Jesus Christ that my sins are forgiven, that my family is protected and that I am an instrument of God's will. I'm constantly trying to align myself to what I think he calls on me to do. And sometimes you hear it strongly and sometimes that voice is more muted."

Barack Obama

Responding to a Beliefnet interview question about how he prays (RNS)

"We have been conducting doctrinal frisks and theological GI-tract exams of our candidates, and we have to remember that these candidates are not running for president of the seminary, and they're not running for pastor-in-chief. They're running to be commander in chief at a time of global war on terrorism."

Ralph Reed

GOP strategist and former Christian Coalition leader (RNS)

Whether I choose to utter “amen,” applaud or offer a glowing smile in appreciation of praiseworthy efforts seems to miss the point in the worship experience, as God and worship touch each of us so personally and individually.

Perhaps I’m missing Richard Berry’s point (Jan. 7), but, for one, I’ll continue to worship where I feel my spirit is unfettered by extraneous “rules” or processes.

TOGETHER: Thanks to God; prayer for blessing

January 30, 2008

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TOGETHER: Thanks to God; prayer for blessing

As I write this last column, the names and faces of so many of you come to my mind. I cherish the times of worship I have shared in our churches and the strong ministries and testimonies the churches have in our Texas cities and communities.

I want to thank my family—Rosemary, our four children, their four spouses and our 10 grandchildren—for their loving encouragement. Rosemary has loved her opportunities to encourage pastors’ wives across Texas. Her love for them and her ability to help them laugh and rejoice in their calling

always amazes me. She is a gracious gift from God to me.



Executive Director
BGCT Executive
Board

I always will be thankful for the encouragement and wise counsel of my predecessor, William Pinson, as he has responded to my questions and requests. His continued involvement in the work of communicating our Texas Baptist heritage is an important service he continues to give to us.

Three wonderful women served with me as executive administrative assistants; Doris Tinker, Janice Coley and Myla McClinton each served with distinction. Doris continues to work with Dr. Pinson, Janice served faithfully until her health forced her to retire, and Myla, with her smile, loving spirit and tenacious attention to her assignments, has generated great appreciation and respect from all who seek help from my office.

Teenager at South Texas Children's Home dies

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Teenager at South Texas Children's Home dies

By Vicki Hewitt

South Texas Children's Home

BEEVILLE—J.D. Gomez, a 17-year-old boy in the care of [South Texas Children's Home](#), died Jan. 25.

Gomez was discovered unconscious in the shower and did not respond to CPR administered by several staff members at the children's home. The sheriff's department and emergency medical service personnel arrived quickly, but Gomez did not regain consciousness.

BaptistWay Bible Series for February 3: Disciple=servant

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BaptistWay Bible Series for February 3

Disciple=servant

- Mark 10:32-45

By Andrew Daugherty