

# Church greeter has firm grip on thousands of names

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## Church greeter has firm grip on thousands of names

**By Dee Anne Finken**

*Religion News Service*

ANCOUVER, Wash. (RNS)—Some people preach. Others bear witness to their faith with a song of praise.

Rich Liedtke ministers with his hands. That is, he offers a firm, two-handed grip that lasts long enough for him to look straight into a churchgoer's eyes, memorize the face, and announce cheerfully: "Hi, I'm Rich. And you are?"



Rich Liedtke  
greeted Kelli  
Wright at the  
Church of God  
in Vancouver,  
Wash. Liedtke  
has  
memorized  
the names of  
more than  
3,000 people  
who come  
through the  
church doors;  
Wright was  
the 3,000th.  
(RNS  
photo/Beth  
Nakamura/*The  
Oregonian*)

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**Lewisville volunteers share pure  
water and Living Water in**

# Guatemala

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Truett  
King of  
First  
Baptist  
Church in  
Lewisville  
reads a  
Bible story  
during  
Vacation  
Bible  
School,  
part of the  
church's  
recent  
mission  
trip to  
Guatemala.  
(See Marv  
Knox's  
[Down  
Home  
column](#) for  
a personal  
glimpse  
into the  
Guatemala  
trip)

# Lewisville volunteers share pure water and Living Water in Guatemala

By **Marv Knox**

*Editor*

ZACAPA, Guatemala—Members of First Baptist Church in Lewisville delivered both Living Water and pure water during a late-fall mission trip to an orphanage in Guatemala.

They told the children about Jesus, the Living Water, who can quench their spiritual thirst. But they also completed a filtration system that now purifies the orphanage's parasite-laced water supply.



Brittainy Holmes of First Baptist Church in Lewisville shows Christ's love to a girl in an orphanage in Zacapa, Guatemala, during a mission trip coordinated by Buckner International. The church is sending three teams a year to the state-run orphanage.

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# Howard Payne coeds mentor girls at juvenile correctional facility

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## Howard Payne coeds mentor girls at juvenile correctional facility

**By George Henson**

*Staff Writer*

BROWNWOOD—Each week, 39 Howard Payne University students travel a few miles down the road to another world. They visit the Ron Jackson State Juvenile Correctional Complex to show girls there how to experience the different life that Jesus offers.

Students Chassidy Carroll and Chaley Perkins share their lives with girls who need positive role models. Carroll, who helped begin the program three years ago, now mentors four girls during her twice-a-week trips to the facility.

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## **Groups say hunger stats, food prices up**

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## **Groups say hunger stats, food prices up**

**By Heather Donckels**

*Religion News Service*

WASHINGTON (RNS)—While millions of Americans stock their kitchens for holiday feasts, many groups are concerned about people who will go hungry during the festive season—and in the weeks and months to come.

Inflation has made food more expensive, making it harder for families to put food on the table and more difficult for food banks to keep their shelves stocked.

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# **Persecutionâ€™s blessing: church growth in India**

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## **Persecution's blessing: church growth in India**

**By Lance Wallace**

*Cooperative Baptist Fellowship*

HYDERABAD, India (ABP)—Sam Bandela has worked five years in the mountainous central region of India. Even as tsunami relief and personal challenges intervened, he continued to find local partners, train indigenous church planters and fund development projects in the largely Hindu region.

Finally, he is seeing results.

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Sam  
Bandela  
(right)  
works with  
local  
pastors in  
India such  
as Narayan  
Paul (left).  
(Randy  
Durham  
photo/CBF)

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# Texas Baptist Forum

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## Texas Baptist Forum

### **Ominous trend**

What a commentary on American Christians! We gave more during the Great Depression to win the world to Jesus than we are giving now.

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

Letters are welcomed. Send them to [marvknox@baptiststandard.com](mailto:marvknox@baptiststandard.com); 250 words maximum.

## **Out ((Loud))**

*“This election, the candidates are talking so much about faith that one would think they wanted to be in the College of Cardinals rather than the Hall of Presidents.”*

### **Jonathan Turley**

George Washington University  
professor (USA Today/RNS)

*“We are not preaching any type of civil disobedience. We’re just simply saying if someone comes to us and they’re in need of food, they’re in need of going to the doctor, we’re not going to take the time to look for a green card. We’re going to minister and show them Christ’s love.”*

### **Robert Wilson**

Ardmore, Okla., pastor, explaining an Oklahoma Baptist resolution that vowed to continue working with immigrants despite a state law that makes it illegal to aid or assist undocumented immigrants (Daily Oklahoman/RNS)

*“Everything she does and says reflects on her husband’s ministry, and I don't think the men understand the stress that places on a woman. Their whole identity can be wrapped up in being the pastor’s wife, and they begin to lose themselves.”*

### **Ginger Kolbaba**

Co-author of a novel about four pastors’ wives (Leadership/RNS)

We have been warned repeatedly that God will move on and find others more obedient to his command to take the gospel. But we continue to turn inward and become more and more self-absorbed with meeting our own needs and those of our churches than with sacrificing to take the good news to those who have yet to hear.

No wonder, according to world-watchers, the center of the Christian faith has now moved to the Southern Hemisphere.

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# **Baylor and Texas Baptist Men bring clean water to Mongolian town**

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A Baylor University team partnered with Texas Baptist Men to bring water filtration systems and water testing to a rural village in northern Mongolia. Pictured are (left to right) Dick Talley, Ron Mathis, and Leo Smith, all from Texas Baptist Men; Governor Khayankhirvaa of Darkhan, Mongolia; and Rene Massengale, Michelle Nemec, and Stacy Pfluger from Baylor University.

# **Baylor and Texas Baptist Men bring clean water to Mongolian town**

**By Matt Pene**

*Baylor University*

KHONGOR, Mongolia—A village in central Mongolia that suffers from extensive water and environmental contamination soon may see better days ahead, thanks to the work of Baylor University researchers and Texas Baptist Men.

Researchers have completed one phase of the Baylor in Mongolia project. They identified about 1,000 people in Khongor who have been become sick due to environmental contamination from industrial mining. About 70 percent of the households in that town have at least one sick person—a crisis that has drawn attention from the World Health Organization.

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## **Diverse group of Christians seeks better relationship with Muslims**

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# Diverse group of Christians seeks better relationship with Muslims

By Adelle M. Banks

*Religion News Service*

WASHINGTON (RNS)—A wide range of Christian theologians and leaders have endorsed a document calling for increased efforts to work with Muslims for peace and justice. The move responds to an earlier call from Muslim leaders seeking common ground.

The new document, ["Loving God and Neighbor Together: A Christian Response to 'A Common Word Between Us and You,'"](#) was signed by about 300 Christians and published in a Nov. 18 advertisement in the *New York Times*.

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# Oklahoma Baptists vow to continue ministering to illegal immigrants

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# Oklahoma Baptists vow to continue ministering to illegal immigrants

By **Hannah Elliott**

*Associated Baptist Press*

MOORE, Okla. (ABP)—Messengers to the annual meeting of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma passed a resolution emphasizing nondiscriminating ministry to illegal immigrants and adopted a record \$24.6 million budget.

“Finishing the Task” was the theme of the convention, which brought almost 900 messengers to First Baptist Church in Moore.

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## **Lectionary helps some Baptist preachers feed their flocks a “balanced diet”**

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## **Lectionary helps some Baptist**



# preachers feed their flocks a 'balanced diet'

**By Robert Dilday**

*Virginia Religious Herald*

RICHMOND, Va.—It's Saturday night. Do you know where your pastor is? A pretty safe guess might be "in a study, frantically developing the next day's sermon."

But how does a preacher decide on the Scripture text? Some free-church Baptist pastors find their answer in the liturgical toolbox. They preach from the lectionary, a centuries-old cycle of Scripture readings assigned to each Sunday of the year.



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# Integrity demands preachers avoid pulpit plagiarism

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# Integrity demands preachers avoid pulpit plagiarism

**By Ken Camp**

*Managing Editor*

If preachers pass off other people's work as their own, they automatically limit themselves to preaching about only eight commandments. "Thou shalt not steal" and "thou shalt not bear false witness" become off-limits.

But preachers can avoid plagiarism by beginning at the right place—giving time and attention to the biblical text before reading or listening to other people's sermons about the text, said Joel Gregory, professor of preaching at Baylor University's Truett Theological Seminary.

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# Preaching: Stand and Deliver

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## Preaching: Stand and Deliver

**By Ken Camp**

*Managing Editor*

God chose "the foolishness of preaching" as the preferred instrument for communicating the message of salvation, the Apostle Paul wrote.

But when the time arrives to stand and deliver that message, how does a preacher measure whether it's an exercise in effectiveness or just plain foolishness?