

Persecution'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.

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

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; 250 words maximum.



"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.

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.

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*.

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.

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.

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.

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?

Baptist volunteers spread cheer by ‘Serving Irving’

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Baptist volunteers spread cheer by ‘Serving Irving’

By Leann Callaway

Special to the Baptist Standard

IRVING—For more than a decade, members of Oak View Baptist Church in Irving have spent Thanksgiving “Serving Irving.” Willow Bend Baptist Church in Plano also helped this year to provide more than 2,000 traditional Thanksgiving meals to apartment complexes throughout the city.

Sergio Matassa, Oak View’s minister of missions, coordinated the outreach ministry. Six teams of volunteers helped with the project.

Volunteer
Alyssa Raley
serves meals
to a family on
Thanksgiving
at The Raible
Place
Apartments in
Irving.
(Photos/Leann
Callaway)

Thanksgiving feast serves nearly 2,000

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Approximately
560 members
of the
Brownwood
community
enjoyed the
24th annual
Community
Thanksgiving
Feast held at
HPU.
Additionally,
1,305
individuals
had the meal
delivered to
their home
that day.

Thanksgiving feast serves nearly 2,000

BROWNWOOD—More than 130 volunteers served 1,976 meals to friends and family in Brownwood area at the 24th annual Community Thanksgiving Feast on Thanksgiving Day at the [Howard Payne University](#) Mabee Center.

“Howard Payne University’s Mabee Center was filled, as 560 guests enjoyed the traditional Thanksgiving meal prepared by the university’s Sodexo Food Service,” said Bill Fishback, coordinator of the event for the past 15 years and assistant vice president for business and human resources at HPU. Last year, 620 people were served at the Mabee Center and 1,305 meals were delivered to families in the community.

The staff of HPU's Sodexo Food Service donated their time preparing the food so others can enjoy the Thanksgiving meal.

"We have the best university food service anywhere," said Fishback. "Don Green and his staff did another outstanding job preparing the food for our friends and neighbors. And then, many of them go home and do the same thing for their own families."

Texas Tidbits

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Texas Tidbits

Couple gives \$5 million to Baylor. [Baylor University](#) received a \$5 million gift from Clifton and Betsy Robinson of Waco. The gift will establish the C. Clifton Robinson and Betsy Sharp Robinson Endowed Scholarship Fund in the Honors College at Baylor. The scholarships will provide need-based financial assistance for academically gifted incoming freshmen, as well as some current Baylor students, who will be known as Clifton and Betsy Robinson Scholars. Scholarship recipients will study in any of the four Honors College programs—Baylor Interdisciplinary Core, the Honors Program, University Scholars and the Great Texts Program —established when the Honors College was created in 2002.

Music scholarship established at HSU. Francis McBeth recently established an endowed scholarship at [Hardin-Simmons University](#) to benefit sophomore, junior or senior theory composition majors in the School of Music. McBeth, a former Cowboy Band member and 1954 Hardin-Simmons graduate, served 40 years on the faculty at Ouachita Baptist University, and he was the conductor of the Arkansas Symphony Orchestra in Little Rock from 1968 to 1972. He received the John Philip Sousa Foundation's Sudler Medal of Honor in 1999, and he was appointed the Composer Laureate of the State of Arkansas.

TOGETHER: Gratitude to God prompts giving

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TOGETHER: Gratitude to God prompts giving

In this wonderful time between Thanksgiving and Christmas, our hearts are filled with gratitude for our families and friends, for our churches and the gospel, for our work and time to rest, for our country and our world.

Counting your blessings always is a good thing to do.



Executive
Director
BGCT
Executive
Board

In my life, this has been the time that I have thought more carefully about giving than at any other time of the year. Perhaps you are the same way. I have no doubt that much of that has to do with Christmas and the giving of gifts to family and friends. But it also has to do with giving mission offerings so that the “best gift I give is to Jesus.” After all, it is his birthday that I celebrate. So making sure the most expensive gift I give is to advance his name and the good news of the Redeemer’s kingdom always has seemed to me to be the right thing to do.

The best motivation for giving always is gratitude. We give because God first gave to us. He gave us life and bountiful provisions in creation. He has given us new life and a sense of significance in salvation. We celebrate creation and redemption, earth and heaven, new life now and eternally. We marvel at the fullness and richness of God’s bountiful love. We find courage to press on in life’s most difficult trials. And we have learned in years of giving that we never have out-given God.