

Around the World: BWA presents Human Rights Award

July 23, 2025

At the Baptist World Congress in Brisbane, the Baptist World Alliance presented its Human Rights Award to **Sano Vamuzo** of Nagaland, India. The award recognizes a lifetime of achievement to an individual who has shown significant accomplishments in global advocacy for human rights and the pursuit of social justice and peace. Vamuzo has dedicated more than four decades to promoting justice, gender equity and reconciliation. “This recognition strengthens our resolve to walk with the unheard, speak peace where there is pain, and build bridges where there are walls,” Vamuzo said. She is a founding member and the first president of the Naga Mothers’ Association, the first voluntary women’s organization for all Naga women. In that role, she led the association in confronting social evils, advocating for the welfare of youth, and raising the visibility of women in public life. Vamuzo served as the first chairperson of the Nagaland State Commission for Women for two terms, where she worked to ensure the protection and advancement of women’s rights across the state. Her service was recognized nationally when she was awarded the Padma Shri in 2024—one of India’s highest civilian honors—for her contributions to social work.



Julio Guarneri

At the annual meeting of the Baptist Convention of Tanzania, Baptist General Convention of Texas Executive Director **Julio Guarneri** signed a memorandum of understanding with Tanzania Baptists, committing to collaborate with six MAP (Missionary Adoption Program) missionaries, with a goal of adding four additional missionaries in one year. MAP connects Texas Baptist churches to indigenous missionaries outside the United States who serve under Baptist entities, associations or conventions. In his “Texas Baptists Weekly” e-mail, Guarneri noted the six MAP missionaries “are starting churches with great diligence and often with great personal sacrifice.” Guarneri and other Texas Baptists who traveled to Tanzania met with the four potential MAP missionaries. “These church starters are passionate and ready to do Great Commission, Great Commandment work,” Guarneri wrote.



Elijah Brown

Baptist World Alliance leaders called for all parties involved in the most-recent armed conflict in southern Syria “to immediately cease hostilities, exercise restraint, and work toward de-escalation and peace.” BWA General Secretary **Elijah Brown** noted in a [July 20 social media post](#) families living in Sweida who are affiliated with Baptist churches have been affected directly by the conflict between the Druze community and Bedouin tribes. “We pray for the protection of innocent civilians and affirm the dignity and right for every person to live in safety,” Brown wrote. “We pray for those who have been impacted, for the churches as they minister, and for love to prevail over violence, hope over fear, and life over death.”



Katie Frugé

Texas Baptists' Christian Life Commission director **Katie Frugé** participated in a panel with 21WilberForce President **Wisam al-Saliby** and BWA General Secretary **Elijah Brown** in a Baptist World Congress breakout session on technology, faith and human rights. Frugé discussed ethical considerations of artificial intelligence, urging tech users not to lose sight of the importance of humanity in considering ethical uses of AI. Al-Saliby explained ways technology is being used around the world to dehumanize people, including AI being used to make decisions about who to target in a war-torn region, or large-scale surveillance that invades privacy or treats people like data. Brown noted a number of tech sector leaders think they can save the world through technology. But with technology, possibility also comes peril—if [transhumanism](#) erodes what it means to be human. Brown urged BWA participants to reaffirm the *imago dei*—the image of God—in humanity and seek wisdom in how technology continues to be developed and intertwine with life.