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November 19, 2004

Posted: 11/19/04

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For Texas Baptist Communications

SAN ANTONIO—During a time when families increasingly look different, a Hardin-Simmons University professor said it is important for churches to broaden their ministry scope.

“The church has really pushed the traditional family as the model,” Randall Maurer told a workshop titled “Making the Most of Family Ministry” during the Baptist General Convention of Texas annual session.

“But families are made up of single parents and blended units. We have been slow to respond to the needs and strengths of these groups.”

When starting a family ministry, Maurer said, it is most important to remain positive, speaking to the assets of a family group, not its weaknesses.

“Talking about the negatives can be very depressing,” he said. “Instead of thinking about fixing people's problems, a church should focus on

encouraging positive aspects of that particular group.”

Family ministry should not be tackled as merely another program.

Rather, it should become a “theme for everything we do,” he said.

Some questions to ask in starting such a ministry are:

When we have taken the first steps, what will we be doing differently as a church?

- How is some of what we want to happen happening right now?
- When our family ministry is successful, what will be the first thing we will notice?

But the most important advice Maurer shared was probably the most simple.

“There must be a team approach to starting this kind of ministry,” he said. “They should be motivated and excited to go back to their churches and create this kind of outreach. If you are not enthusiastic, then the ministry may not thrive.”

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