

Vernon to be BGCT vice presidential nominee

November 2, 2005

Posted: 9/16/05

Vernon to be BGCT vice presidential nominee

By Marv Knox

Editor

LEVELLAND—A South Plains pastor with extensive involvement in Baptist General Convention of Texas affairs will be nominated as first vice president of the convention this fall.

Steve Vernon, pastor of First Baptist Church in Levelland and a former BGCT second vice president, will be nominated for the convention's second-highest elected position by Stacy Conner, the convention's current second vice president.

The BGCT will choose new leaders during its annual meeting in Austin Nov. 14-15. Michael Bell, pastor of Greater St. Stephen First Baptist Church in Fort Worth and the convention's current first vice president, already has been announced as a presidential candidate.

Steve Vernon

“Steve has not only served as a pastor with distinction, but he has served

our convention well," Conner said, citing Vernon's numerous involvements in BGCT life. "I believe that Steve will serve our convention with distinction in the coming year."

Vernon's specific areas of service in the convention are eclipsed by his "feel for the pulse of the Baptists of our state," Conner said. "With an understanding of denominational issues, Steve also listens to and responds to the needs of the people in our congregations. Steve understands the importance of helping Texas Baptists realize the ministries of the convention are important to all of us."

Vernon appreciates the value of Texas Baptist cooperation, Conner added.

"Steve communicates to his own church and his sphere of influence that we do more together than we can do apart. I believe Steve will continue to be a good representative for the need of shared ministry among Texas Baptists."

Vernon is willing to serve as a BGCT vice president "because of an interest in missions, telling the story of Christ in a variety of ways, which Texas Baptists do," he said. "It's something you can invest your life in, and that's why I would pursue this."

He also noted the convention's priorities resonate with his own. "What I appreciate about the BGCT and why I have worked there is because I see an overall commitment to sharing the gospel," he said, noting the convention's array of missions and ministries, such as partnerships, Texas Baptist Men, Woman's Missionary Union and the WorldconneX missions network, as well as educational, child-care and elder-care institutions and the Christian Life Commission.

"All of that opens the door for us to tell the story" of Christ to a hurting world, he said.

In addition, Vernon said he is excited about the possibility of serving

alongside Bell, who would be the BGCT's first African-American president.

“I would like to be there to support Michael and his aims and goals—help him accomplish a lot of things,” he said. “One of the things that appeals to me about the BGCT is it accepts all comers at the table to work together on the enterprise of missions.”

Vernon is president of the Panhandle-Plains Pastors' and Laymen's Conference and was the BGCT's second vice president in 2001-02.

He has been a vice chairman of the BGCT Christian Life Commission and a trustee of Wayland Baptist University. He also has served on the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship's national and state coordinating councils. He has participated in multiple mission trips and has served in various Baptist associational leadership positions.

He has been pastor of the Levelland church since 1991 and also was pastor of churches in Panhandle, Kress and Ames, Okla.

In 2004, First Baptist Church in Levelland had 1,710 resident members and averaged 382 in Bible study. The church baptized 12 people. Its receipts totalled slightly more than \$1 million, and it contributed \$165,101 to missions, including \$85,740 to the Cooperative Program.

Vernon is a graduate of Baylor University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Donna, have three children.

News of religion, faith, missions, Bible study and Christian ministry among Texas Baptist churches, in the BGCT, the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) and around the world.