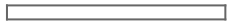


Baptist University of the Americas celebrates founder's day_50304

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President
Albert
Reyes
addresses a
founder's
day
celebration,
predicting
Baptist
University
of the
Americas'
on-campus
enrollment
will reach
1,000
within 10
years, and
another
1,000
students
will enroll
in off-
campus
institutes
throughout
Latin
America
and the
United
States.

Baptist University of the Americas celebrates founder's day

SAN ANTONIO—Students marched with 66 flags in a “parade of nations” at the Baptist University of the Americas founder's day, representing countries the school's alumni have impacted.

“But ... the past is not the focus. The current students and those coming after them are the real thrill,” said Bill Thornton, head of BUA's development council. “After their education, they will disperse like the Christians after Pentecost and literally impact countries around the world.”

Charles Johnson, pastor of Trinity Baptist Church in San Antonio and a member of the development council, said: “San Antonio was founded by Christian missionaries in the 1700s and named after a servant of Christ's church. Indeed, the city was claimed for Christ long ago, and now BUA is making good on that claim.”

University President Albert Reyes said the school is determined to “form men and women as transformational agents” to serve not only in communities throughout Texas, but also around the world.

“It seems like God is rearranging the peoples of the earth and bringing folks of unfamiliar cultures to our front door,” Reyes said. “Every day the Western Hemisphere is more like a neighborhood or an integrated system with parts depending on each other. We can fear the unknown cultures and worldviews, or we can become incarnational, walk down the street, knock on the door and announce that the kingdom of God is near.”

Hispanics are the most rapidly growing segment not only of the U.S. population but also of the membership of Baptist and other evangelical Christian churches, he noted.

“Today in the United States, 7.7 out of every 10 conversions to Christianity come from people with a Hispanic background,” Reyes said. “Today in Texas alone, more than 100 Hispanic Baptist churches are without pastors even as Texas Baptists aim to start 100 new Hispanic congregations each year.”

But the university's responsibility is larger than the state, he stressed.

“Mexico is more than our neighbor; she is our sister. And we will continue to build our partnerships there,” he said. The university will seek to have a worldwide impact by mobilizing a “global force of ministry leaders who will be ready to go wherever the Lord of the harvest sends them.”

To that end, Reyes predicted the school's on-campus enrollment will hit 1,000 in the next 10 years with another 1,000 studying at the university's Baptist Bible institutes across the United States and Latin America. In the last four years, the school's enrollment has jumped from 43 to 207, while extension center enrollment has swelled to 500.

“We believe our mission is essential to building a new multicultural society in a bicultural hemisphere,” Reyes said.

As a part of the founder's day celebration, the school presented awards to a Central Texas church, a former president of the institution and a San Antonio pastor.

First Baptist Church of Austin received an award for dedicated service by a church. Last fall, the church made a \$40,000 donation to establish an endowed scholarship in the name of one of its members.

“I have come to the conclusion that BUA really has no future without intentional partnerships with local churches,” Reyes said.

H.B. Ramsour, former president of what was then called Mexican Baptist

Bible Institute, was recognized for his “continued support and encouragement” to the school.

Brad Russell, pastor of The Springs Church in northwest San Antonio, received an award for for his work developing the new BUA logo.

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.