

Texas Baptists challenged to ‘share the light’

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DALLAS—The question for Texas Baptists is “how do we do more together this century to tell the world about Jesus Christ,” Duane Brooks, pastor of [Tallowood Baptist Church](#) in Houston, told the Baptist General Convention of Texas annual meeting.

“God is calling us, not to perpetuate the past, but to be a light to all the people of the earth,” Brooks said during the annual meeting sermon. “If we have more memories of a glorious past than dreams of the future, we are dying.”

Duane Brooks

Anyone can count the seeds in an apple by cutting it open, but “only God can count the number of apples in a seed,” he pointed out.

“When we spend all our time figuring out what can be done if we invest this much money, this program, that is counting seeds. But when each of us

becomes a seed God can use, we not only will bring salvations, but we will be salvation.”

God’s vision for his people surpasses their dreams, he said.

“Whatever our vision for Texas Baptists is, it is unlikely that our vision is greater than God’s vision for us,” he explained, calling for a commitment to “being servants” rather than “serving.”

“If I choose to serve, then I get to choose whom, when and where I serve,” he explained. “But if I am a servant, then I serve at the pleasure of the master who created and redeemed me. I have no agenda of my own.”



Recounting an experience from his student days at Baylor University, Brooks told of a next-door neighbor from Ghana whose sexually immoral lifestyle, blaring music that surged through paper-thin apartment walls and a habit of stealing newspapers caused Brooks to resent him.

But one evening, Brooks heard someone knock on the neighbor’s door and turned down his television to eavesdrop. He recognized the voice of Ed Wittner, music minister at Columbus Avenue Baptist Church in Waco, and listened as Wittner shared the plan of salvation with the young man. Then he heard his neighbor pray to receive Christ.

“I hung my head and wept,” he confessed. “I had grown up giving to Lottie Moon and Annie Armstrong missions offerings. As pastor, I had led my churches to give increasing amounts to those mission offerings. But God had to send another minister to win the soul of my next-door neighbor.”

Texas is filled with such neighbors today, he noted. “And it’s time we quit outsourcing ‘missions’ to Lottie Moon and invest our lives in spreading the gospel.”

Preaching from Isaiah, Brooks explored what the Scriptures say about being a servant.

“It is easy to grow weary as servants,” he admitted. “Isaiah says, ‘I have labored to no purpose; I have spent my strength in vain.’ He almost gives in to despair. Perhaps his role is not as important as he had thought. But he never loses sight of the God in whose hand he rests and the God who is his great reward and portion. And in the next verse, he remembers God’s purpose and power.

“My friend Shawn Shannon always has an excellent answer when I ask her how she is doing. ‘I am sustained.’ If we are sustained today, it is because we have a Savior who upholds us. When we choose to serve the most high God, we can trust him to sustain us even in the darkest times.”

Texas Baptists servants “must share the light with the nations” by “embodying the light that is Jesus Christ” as well as “extending the light to the ends of the earth.”

“If we will not take salvation to the ends of the earth, God will find someone who will,” he concluded. “While we wrestle over the control of our convention and institutions, the world is dying without Christ, and our state is dying without Christ, and our cities are dying without Christ.

“I challenge you to go back to your churches and say, ‘Beginning now, let’s start going on short-term mission trips every day for the rest of our lives to tell our world about Jesus.’”

in the BGCT, the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) and around the world.