

Trust in God in turbulent times, president tells BGCT

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By Sara Hawkins

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DALLAS—In turbulent times, Texas Baptists can rest in the promise: “God will take care of you,” Michael Bell of Fort Worth told the Baptist General Convention of Texas in his president’s address.

“As I prepare to exit stage left, I am compelled to call your attention to the importance of your participation and your increased involvement in the life of our convention,” Bell said.

Michael
Bell,
pastor of
Greater St.
Stephen
First
Baptist
Church in
Fort
Worth,
delivers
the
president's
message to
the Baptist
General
Convention
of Texas.
(Photo by
Robin
Kenagy)

“One of the under-appreciated strengths of our partnering together is the participation of the members of our churches on convention committees. It tremendously blesses our work.”

When briefly addressing the issues currently facing the BGCT in the Rio Grande Valley, Bell used his distaste for flying as an example.

“When it comes to traveling, I must confess, I do not like flying. I avoid flying at all cost. And it’s because of the turbulence. But I had an epiphany a couple months ago. To get from here to there, you have to experience

turbulence sometimes. Ladies and gentlemen, we have experienced turbulence.



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“We just have to ride it out. But there is calmer air ahead. Be not dismayed; God will take care of you.”

At the beginning of his term, Bell said, he sought to represent the interests of all Texas Baptists as well as improve the president’s council on the BGCT Cooperative Program and attempted to think generationally while forming stronger alliances with Kids Hope USA.

He also convened the first Inter-Fellowship Consultation—a gathering that included the leaders of community groups, the Texas Fellowship of Cowboy Churches, Hispanic Baptist Convention, African American Fellowship of Churches, intercultural ministries, and smaller-membership churches and bivocational ministers.

The purpose of convening the consortium was to strengthen their involvement in the life of the BGCT.



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“As the convention continues to become more and more diverse, God continues to nudge us beyond the cozy confines of our comfort zones,” Bell said. “We truly are a broad Baptist family. We must negotiate the tension

between diversity and inclusion. We have made significant strides toward inclusion in the decision- making process, we must build on this. What I said at the beginning of this journey is still true. The biggest room in the world is the room for improvement.”

Bell told messengers their participation is essential to the success of the BGCT.

“The BGCT doesn’t pretend to have all the answers, this is collaboration, and together we are doing more,” he said.

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