

Maciel inaugurated as BUA president; pledges commitment to servant leadership

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President
René Maciel
smiles
during the
closing
recessional
of his
presidential
inauguration
at Baptist
University of
the
Américas.
Maciel is
followed by
Board Chair
Phyllis
Nichols, and
(left to right
in next row)
Hulitt Gloer,
Paul Powell,
Charles
Wade, Nelda
Taylor and
Baldemar
Borrego.
(Photos
courtesy of
BUA)

Maciel inaugurated as BUA president; pledges commitment to servant leadership

By Marv Knox

Editor

SAN ANTONIO—Service and leadership will be the themes of René Maciel’s tenure as the seventh president of [Baptist University of the Americas](#), he stressed at his inauguration Sept. 28.

“We want to train our students to be servant-leaders,” Maciel said at First Mexican Baptist Church in San Antonio. The university exists to inform and empower servant-leaders so they can meet “the vast human needs in the world around them,” he added.



René Maciel speaks
following his inauguration
as president Baptist
University of the Américas
in San Antonio

“People today want to be leaders but not servants,” he acknowledged, contrasting popular culture with BUA’s purpose—“forging new leaders, servant-leaders, who love their families, give of themselves and serve the world.”

“My most profound goal is to help BUA establish a culture of servanthood that calls students to give up their lives in service to others,” he pledged.

Maciel recalled that he learned about service from the example set by his parents. “I’ve never known them when they were not serving someone,” he said.

During the inauguration, his father, Eleazar Maciel, admonished him to stay true to those principles. “The call of a Christian leader is the role of a servant,” he advised.

The theme of service echoed through the inaugural address delivered by Hulitt Gloer, professor at Baylor University’s Truett Theological Seminary. He and Maciel worked alongside each other at Truett Seminary, when Maciel was assistant dean, the post he held before joining BUA.

Gloer described Jesus’ disciples’ surprise at the Last Supper: They expected Jesus to become a political leader and anticipated sharing in his power. But instead, he shocked them by taking the role of a lowly servant, picking up a towel and basin of water, and washing their feet.

When the Apostle Peter tried to rebuke him, Jesus told him, “If you don’t accept me for who I am, you can have no part of me. ... You should do as I

have done," Gloer reported.

"Wherever people are in anguish, despair, despondency and dying, we're called to pick up a towel," he said.

For Jesus, "picking up the towel was prelude to picking up the cross," he noted, adding, "The weight of the cross is the service of the world. ... Take up the cross, the towel. You will have the mind of Christ, and (the world) will see him in you."

Maciel brings "humility, vision, energy, integrity and dedication" to this task, said Paul Powell, recently retired dean at Truett Seminary.

Predicting BUA's future under Maciel's leadership, Powell added: "The best days are ahead, and we've never needed it more."

Baptist University of the Americas is vital to the Baptist General Convention of Texas, the convention's executive director, Charles Wade, stressed.

"You can know the Baptists of Texas stand behind you," Wade told Maciel. "The investment that has been made has never, ever been regretted."

Leaders of the university's board of directors cited divine providence in Maciel's selection as president.

"This historic event is not by choice," said board Chairwoman Phyllis Nichols and board member Teo Cisneros, who translated the words into Spanish. "Brother René is God's choice for this time to serve as the seventh president of Baptist University of the Americas."

Maciel, 48, is a graduate of Hardin-Simmons University and Baylor University.

He was a recruiter and admissions counselor and later director of

admissions at Hardin-Simmons; assistant admissions counselor at Baylor; chief administrator of New Mexico Baptist Children's Home; and director of student services and then assistant dean at Truett Seminary.

He and his wife, Sabrina, have two daughters, Brianna and Carmen.

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