

TOGETHER: Texas Baptists Engage evangelism

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"Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved" (Romans 10:1).

The Apostle Paul loved people. He yearned for them to know God as he had come to know him. It is much too easy to get preoccupied with good things and neglect the main thing, the matters that have eternal consequences.



The Engage evangelism conference stirred my heart for those who need to know Jesus and his power to change and save their lives. There is eternal value in listening to evangelists preach the gospel and share their stories. We all need times of reminding that people are all around us whom we are not seeing, and they are hungry for a relationship with God. A Christian loves to share with people that they do matter to God, and Jesus is the proof.

We heard challenging preaching and authentic testimonies. I am grateful that in my last month as your executive director, I had the privilege of being a part of the rebirth of the evangelism conference. I call on all Texas Baptists to pray for Jon Randles, our new evangelism director, and his wife, Kelly, as they offer themselves to God and to our churches for renewing in our hearts a passion for souls.

Let me encourage you to attend one of the five regional Engage XP conferences in your area in February—El Paso, First Baptist Church, Feb. 10; Belton, First Baptist Church, Feb. 11; Kingwood, Woodridge Baptist Church, Feb. 12; San Antonio, First Baptist Church of Universal City, Feb. 13; and Midland, First Baptist Church, Feb. 14.

You can order tapes from the conference, and they will bless and encourage you. But do make a point to be in one of these one-day conferences, and let the messages, the worship, the times of prayer and the fellowship reignite your zeal for reaching people for Christ.

I will be a better preacher Sunday because of what I heard and felt at Engage. And I will be more alert to every person I meet, too.

I heard three stories from bivocational pastors who, within the last two years, had gone to churches that were almost dead, and now those churches are thriving. I met a pastor who found new zeal in ministry as he helped start a new cowboy church. I shared the stories of three of our new church starts that baptized over 100 people this past year—a multi-ethnic church in Abilene, a traditional/contemporary church in Boerne and a cowboy church in East Texas.

I visited with several pastors at Engage who shared with me that the conference had called them to a new hope that they could help their people be effective in sharing their faith and drawing people to Christ.

You don't have to baptize 100 people to be successful in the eyes of God or

of your fellow pastors. But we all have to be alert to people all around us and to be intentional in helping people find their way to God if we are to be faithful to our calling.

We are loved.

Charles Wade is executive director of the Baptist General Convention of Texas Executive Board.

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