

Around the State: Calling Conference at ETBU, Maston Lecture at DBU

October 10, 2018



Grace Lott, sophomore at East Texas Baptist University, takes notes during a breakout session at the Calling Conference. The sessions covered fields such as academics, pastoral ministry, children's ministry, community ministry, worship ministry, and youth ministry. (ETBU Photo)

Jeter Basden, professor emeritus of religion and retired director of ministry guidance at Baylor University, and **Pike Wisener**, senior pastor of First Baptist Church in Tyler, were featured speakers at East Texas Baptist University's fourth annual Calling Conference. The conference provided opportunities for students exploring vocational ministry to listen to and talk

with experienced ministry professionals. “I believe the only way to embrace and fulfill our calling is to seek the Lord and walk with him daily, relying on the Holy Spirit to develop and mature us for our God-given assignment,” Wisener said in his chapel address. Other presenters at breakout sessions were **Lisa Keeling**, children’s education minister at Tallowood Baptist Church in Houston; **Cassie Hammett**, founder and director of Hub Urban Ministries; **Chris Smith**, assistant professor of worship at ETBU; and **Casey Cockrell**, minister to students at First Baptist Church in Tyler.

Shirley Hoogstra, president of the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities, will deliver the T.B. Maston Lecture at Dallas Baptist University. Hoogstra, an attorney and former vice president at Calvin College, will speak at 10 a.m., Oct. 29, in Pilgrim Chapel on the DBU campus.

Malcolm Foley, a doctoral student in Baylor University’s religion department, led a Christian Studies Forum at the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor, speaking “The Gospel in Flames: Lynching and the Black Churches.” Foley’s dissertation studies focus on the response of African-American Christians to lynching from the late 19th century into the early 20th century. “I’m firmly of the opinion that evil is not defeated when we look away from it,” Foley said. “As Christ’s death and resurrection were the most successful full-frontal assault on sin that the world has ever known, so also we, as those united to that same Christ and as partakers of that same Holy Spirit, must look evil in the face, determine its root, and pluck it out.”



Kristen Gladney joined Buckner International as the foster care and adoption recruiter. She will be responsible for establishing relationships with churches, individuals and the community at large to raise awareness about needs within foster care and adoption and offer ways to meet those needs. She holds a Bachelor of Art degree in religion and Spanish from the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor. She previously worked as a missionary in inner-city Dallas and Belize, and she spent two years as a foster parent with Florida Baptist Children's Home.

Robert A.J. Gagnon joined the faculty of Houston Baptist University's School of Christian Thought. Most recently, Gagnon was an associate professor of New Testament at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. He earned his undergraduate degree from Dartmouth College and a Master of Arts in Theological Studies degree from Harvard Divinity School. He earned his doctorate in New Testament from Princeton Theological Seminary.



Mike Taylor, executive director of

UK-USA Ministries, addresses the Engage Mission Conference at Dallas Baptist University. (DBU Photo / Efrain Carbajal)

Mike Taylor, executive director of UK-USA Ministries, was the keynote speaker for the annual Engage Mission Conference at Dallas Baptist University. Other speakers included **KayLyn Hopper**, professor at DBU, and **Jordan Davis**, director of the university's counseling center. The conference is designed to train and challenge students to join in God's mission and share Christ's love through their callings as they serve both domestically and abroad.

For the second year in a row, the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption recognized Baylor University on its Top 100 Best Adoption-Friendly Workplaces List. Baylor tied for No. 86 overall among the nation's employers and ranked No. 3 in the education industry on the annual list that recognizes organizations that strive to make adoption a supported option for every working parent. The list compares financial reimbursement and paid leave offered to parents who adopt, based on surveys of organizations across the United States, and recognizes employers by size, industry, best paid leave and foster care benefits. In 2017, Baylor implemented expansive new policies that provide paid parental leave for staff and an adoption assistance program that benefits both staff and faculty.



Bob and Gayle Riley (left) and Michelle and Blair Blackburn (right) present Servant Leader Awards to ETBU students Mpanga Chanda from Lusaka, Zambia, and Sheldon McGowan from Tyler.

East Texas Baptist University presented the Bob and Gayle Riley Servant Leadership Award to students **Mpanga Chanda** from Lusaka, Zambia, and **Sheldon McGowan** from Tyler. Chanda, a senior accounting major, has served as a supplementary instruction tutor in accounting and economics, as a worship leader in chapel and at Greenhouse Ministry events, and as head of a recycling project. McGowan, a secondary education major with a concentration in social studies, has been a leader in Student Government Association, Culture Outreach Ministries and as senior pastor at Greater Macedonia Missionary Baptist Church in Marshall. ETBU grants the Riley Servant Leadership Award annually to two upperclassmen students who exemplify the characteristics of a Christian servant leader. Peers, faculty and staff nominate students in recognition of their commitment to Christ's model of servanthood.

Houston Baptist University launched a Global Center for Mental Healthcare and Ministry. The center, within the university's College of Education and Behavioral Sciences, offers both residential and online undergraduate and graduate programs in counseling, psychology, marriage and family specialties, pastoral counseling and human services.

Baylor University is accepting nominations through Nov. 30 for an alumni-elected seat on the board of regents. Nominees must be graduates of Baylor University who are committed Christians and active church members. For a complete list of procedures, qualifications, election rules and schedule, click [here](#).

Retirement

Carolyn Porterfield as missional lifestyle strategist for adults and multicultural groups with Woman's Missionary Union of Texas, effective Jan. 1, 2019. She retires after 24 years with Texas WMU and 38 years in ministry and missions. She came to work for Texas WMU as associate executive director in 1992, and she served as executive director-treasurer from 2001 to 2007. She rejoined the Texas WMU staff in 2009. Previously, she worked with national WMU as Baptist Young Women consultant and with the Arkansas Baptist Convention as consultant for Baptist Women/Baptist Young Women. She also worked with the Baptist General Convention of Texas and its Church2Church disaster response partnership effort in the aftermath of Hurricane Ike.

