

# Convención challenged, enlivened at annual meeting

June 29, 2022

*Una traducción al español está disponible [aquí](#).*

Attendees of Convención Bautista Hispana de Texas' annual meeting heard challenges to revitalize their churches and to be on mission.

During the June 26-28 meeting at Trinity Baptist Church in San Antonio, messengers elected a historic slate of new officers was elected and approved an increased 2023 budget.

Messengers also were presented with proposed changes to Convención's constitution, some of which will be brought for a vote at the next annual meeting during Texas Baptists' Family Gathering in McAllen, July 16-18, 2023. The proposed amendments would update the constitution with current terminology.

The annual meeting drew a total attendance of 816, including 150 messengers. Those in attendance during the Tuesday morning business session approved a 2023 budget of \$407,928.91, an increase of \$12,105.63 from 2022.

## Historic slate of officers

In what was said to be a first for Convención, messengers elected three women officers.

Sergio Ramos, church engagement officer for Buckner International and member of La Promesa in Dallas where he was an interim pastor, was nominated for president by [Julio Guarneri](#), lead pastor of Calvary Baptist

Church in McAllen, president of the Baptist General Convention of Texas and Convención parliamentarian. Ramos was elected by acclamation.

Sylvia Ake, from Primera Iglesia Bautista in Edinburg, was nominated for first vice president by her husband, Pastor Abiel Ake of Primera Iglesia Bautista in Edinburg and Convención secretary. She also was elected by acclamation.

Three nominees were presented for second vice president—Lili Martinez Lara, from Iglesia Bautista Emmanuel in McAllen; José Cardenas, pastor of El Calvario Iglesia Bautista in Mount Pleasant; and Rafael Solís from Iglesia Bautista Azle Avenue in Fort Worth. After a runoff between Lara and Cardenas, Lara was elected as second vice president.

Claudia Treviño, from Iglesia Bautista El Calvario in San Antonio, was nominated by [Bea Mesquias](#), executive director and treasurer of Union Femenil Misionera de Texas and member of Iglesia Bautista Ágape. Treviño also was elected by acclamation.

## Challenges issued

Incumbent President Tony Miranda—whose new book, [\*Las Parábolas de Jesús en su Contexto\*](#), debuted during the meeting—reminded attendees that restoring a declined church to health and vitality is a supernatural work of God. Submitting to God's word is a first step in that restoration. To reverse decline, churches must regain a passion for holiness, God's word and prayer.

Stagnant or declining churches also need to evaluate what they are doing and form a plan of action. They will find their purpose and mission in Jesus' commission recorded in Matthew 28:18-20.

Tomás Mackey, president of the Baptist World Alliance, issued a similar

charge. Referencing Matthew 28:18-20, he called attendees to be at work developing disciples of Christ in the realms of family, church and the public.

Luis López, executive director of Hispanic relations and mobilization for the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee, delivered the annual message. He pointed to the COVID-19 pandemic, racial tension and immigrants who died in San Antonio June 27 as evidence for the need for revival.

“Can God revive the church?” López asked. Referring to the song preceding his message—“What a Beautiful Name”—he declared the church can be revived through the powerful name of Jesus. For such revival, God must be first in our lives, our worship and our possessions, he proclaimed.

## **Prayers for those suffering**

During the opening session, Carlos Contreras, pastor of Primera Iglesia Bautista in Uvalde; Neftali Barboza, pastor of Iglesia Nueva Jerico in Uvalde; and Julian Moreno, pastor emeritus of Primera Iglesia Bautista in Uvalde and grandfather of [Lexi Rubio](#), one of the 19 children killed May 24, 2022, in a mass shooting at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, addressed attendees.

Contreras and Barboza expressed their gratitude for the prayers and support of Christian brothers and sisters following the mass shooting. They also communicated their pain and sorrow, as well as their trust in God’s word and hope in heaven.

Through tears and choked words, Moreno shared his initial desire to condemn and to harm the mass shooter. He remembered Jesus’ commands to love our enemies and our neighbors, and he knew he must not condemn his granddaughter’s killer. Moreno’s ministry now is to his other

grandchildren who struggle to understand what has happened.

Pastors were invited to gather around Contreras, Barboza and Mendoza to pray for them.

Attendees also set aside time in separate sessions to pray for Ukraine and for the families of the [51 immigrants who died](#) after being trapped in a tractor-trailer in San Antonio June 27.

## Celebrations

Several attendees commented on the strong showing of Baptist universities and seminaries from Texas and elsewhere. The presence of these schools throughout the annual meeting and programming communicated to attendees the seriousness with which these schools seek to enroll, scholarship, train and graduate Hispanic students and leaders.

While celebrating the 75th anniversary of Baptist University of the Américas, President Abe Jaquez announced a memorandum of understanding with the El Paso Baptist Association. Beginning Aug. 22, 2022, BUA online students in the El Paso area pursuing a Bachelor of Arts degree in Biblical/Theological Studies will be able to access computers and technical assistance at the EPBA site.