

Guarneri calls on Texas Baptists to ‘seize the day’

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MCALLEN—Texas Baptists need to “understand what time it is”—not just the day and hour, but the significance of the moment, Baptist General Convention of Texas President Julio Guarneri told messengers to the convention’s annual meeting in McAllen.

When Jesus announced “the time has come” at the beginning of his public ministry, he was speaking of a key moment in God’s redemptive plan for humanity, said Guarneri, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in McAllen.

Guarneri pointed out the distinction between *chronos*, the Greek word for chronological time, and *kairos*, which means a pivotal moment or important time.

“We live in a *kairos* moment,” he said, pointing to the challenges and opportunities for Texas Baptists. “The nations have come to us.”

Texas is home to a rapidly growing and increasingly diverse population representing 164 language groups, Guarneri said, noting Texas Baptist churches offer ministries in about half of those languages.

In light of the burgeoning Hispanic population in Texas, Texas Baptists “need to double or triple the number of Hispanic churches” in the state, he said.

Globally, 2,002 people groups still do not have the Bible available in their “heart language,” he noted. He pointed to [Finishing the Task](#) as an international movement to provide everyone on the planet access to the Bible in their own preferred language by 2033.

Guarneri challenged Texas Baptists not to become distracted or divided by secondary matters.

“We’re not an issue-driven convention,” he said. “We’re a mission-driven convention.”

The mission of advancing God’s kingdom should unify and energize Texas Baptists, he said. “Let’s seize the moment.”

Officers elected

Messengers to the BGCT annual meeting elected Guarneri to a second one-year term as president and elected Ronny Marriott, pastor of First Baptist Church in Burleson, as first vice president.



Baptist General Convention of Texas officers elected in McAllen are President Julio Guarneri (center), First Vice President Ronny Marriott (left) and Second Vice President Debbie Potter. (BGCT Photo)

In the only contested race, messengers elected Debbie Potter, minister of

children at Trinity Baptist Church in San Antonio, by a 173-133 vote over Glenn Lackey, a lay leader from Canyon Creek Baptist Church in Temple and co-founder of the First Blessing ministry.

Two officers were elected by unanimous consent—Bernie Spooner from Plymouth Park Baptist Church in Irving as secretary of the corporation and David Cozart from Meadowbrook Baptist Church in Waco as registration secretary.

In other business, messengers approved a recommendation from the committee on annual meeting to hold Texas Baptists' 2026 annual meeting in Waco. The 2024 annual meeting also is in Waco, and the 2025 annual meeting is set for Abilene.

Texas Baptists' Family Gathering drew 1,900 participants—680 messengers elected by their churches and 1,220 registered visitors.

With additional reporting by George Schroeder of Texas Baptists' communications office.