

Hardage thanks Texas Baptists for making a difference

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FRISCO—Texas Baptists are engaged in life-changing and difference-making work around the state, [Baptist General Convention of Texas](#) Executive Director David Hardage reported at the convention's annual meeting.

"These are challenging times. ... But in the midst of challenges, there are amazing blessings," Hardage said.

He introduced several BGCT Executive Board staff who are involving churches and individuals in innovative ministries.

David Scott serves as director of Bounce, a disaster recovery ministry involving students from sixth grade through college. Scott invited churches to send their students to join in trips during spring break and the summer of 2016 for disaster recovery and community rehabilitation projects.

Elizabeth Biedryzcki, the BGCT South Texas regional coordinator, launched a ministry working primarily with the millennial generation, both inside and outside the church. By engaging young adults in causes they already care about, Christians can build relationships that offer opportunities for evangelism and discipleship.

Delvin Atchison leads the BGCT Great Commission Team. This new initiative combines the evangelism and discipleship teams to form one group, aimed at telling people about Jesus and raising them up in mature faith.

Chris Liebrum, who directs the Cooperative Program ministries office, told

a personal story of Cooperative Program-supported ministries, describing how both his parents grew up in what then was called the Buckner Orphan's Home in Dallas.



“We need you to be an advocate for Texas Baptists’ Cooperative Program giving,” Hardage encouraged messengers to the annual meeting.

Hardage thanked Texas Baptists for embracing changes over the past year, including the relocation of the Christian Life Commission to Austin, the Historical Collection and Archives to Waco and the BGCT Executive Board staff offices to North Dallas.

He expressed gratitude for Texas Baptists who serve on boards for institutions, agencies and affiliated ministries that are making a difference around the state.

“For your willingness to serve and to embrace the changes around us, thank you,” Hardage said. “I want to be grateful for the difference we are making in Texas.”

Hardage noted in the past five years, Texas Baptists have started 433 churches statewide with a 97 percent success rate. Nationally, survival rates for new congregations average below 40 percent.

He also affirmed the work of the CLC, the convention’s public policy and ethics agency.

“Our CLC in Austin is advocating day-in and day-out, making a difference on our behalf for causes that are good and right. They are a voice for the voiceless,” Hardage said.

He also praised Texas Baptists’ involvement in collegiate outreach, with Baptist Student Ministries on 115 campuses in the state.

“The most vulnerable and impressionable in society today are 18- to 25-year-olds,” Hardage said. “There isn’t a convention anywhere in this state or other states that is having the impact we are having. We make a difference.”

At a recent meeting at Baylor University’s Truett Seminary, Hardage noted, he was encouraged by the faith and enthusiasm of the ministerial students.

“Pray for the next generation as they are beginning to get a glimpse of the practice and power of cooperation through this convention we call Texas Baptists,” Hardage said.