

New BGCT president sees 100 percent mandate for positive change

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FORT WORTH—David Lowrie won the Baptist General Convention of Texas president's race with 53 percent of the votes cast, but he believes messengers to the annual meeting issued a unanimous mandate for change.

"I truly believe 100 percent of the people who voted were voting for positive, progressive change," Lowrie, pastor of First Baptist Church in Canyon, said in an interview soon after his election.

Both he and the other nominee for president—Stephen Hatfield, pastor of First Baptist Church in Lewisville—share a common commitment to see the convention embrace the "God-sized" Texas Hope 2010 challenge to share the gospel with every Texan by Easter 2010 and ensure no child in the state goes hungry, Lowrie said.

Hatfield serves as co-chair of the BGCT Future Focus Committee, the convention's strategic planning committee on which Lowrie also serves.

"There's a consensus that we need to simplify and clearly articulate our primary values," Lowrie said, when asked about the committee.

In his committee report to the annual meeting, Hatfield identified three priorities—missions and evangelism, Christian education and meeting human needs. Those priorities are "bedrock" and "the heartbeat of who we need to be," Lowrie said.

He praised BGCT Executive Director Randel Everett for casting the Texas Hope 2010 vision. First Baptist Church already has prayed for every person listed in the Canyon phonebook, prayer-walked the streets of their town and started knocking on the doors of every household in Canyon, Lowrie noted.

“Texas Hope 2010 is more than a motto” to Lowrie and members of his church, Everett said. “It’s what they already are doing.”

Last year, Lowrie narrowly lost the BGCT president’s race to Joy Fenner, former executive director of Woman’s Missionary Union of Texas.

Lowrie characterized himself as “a centrist-type leader” who is “representative of people within the BGCT who continue to identify themselves as Southern Baptist.”

He noted his “deepened appreciation” over the last two years for Texas Baptists who were involved in political action to protect the BGCT and preserve its commitments to historic Baptist principles.

Texas Baptists Committed—the organization that mobilized political opposition to any fundamentalist inroads into the BGCT—did not endorse any candidates for office this year for the first time in more than 20 years.

Lowrie praised the “open convention” this year and the absence of political machinations.

“Political days had their purpose, but those days are over,” he said.

Lowrie, 48, becomes the first second-generation BGCT president. His father, longtime First Baptist Church of Lubbock Pastor D.L. Lowrie, served two one-year terms in the early 1980s.