Speakers agree: Texas Baptists called to a mission

July 16, 2013

SAN ANTONIO—Texas Baptists have been called to reach the state for Christ—a task that must be completed, speakers told the Texas Baptist Family Gathering.

God has called Texas Baptists to share their faith with their communities, their state and beyond, speakers stressed at the second evening worship service during the three-day Family Gathering.

That requires believers to focus intensely on the mission at hand, said Bedilu Yirga, pastor of Ethiopian Evangelical Baptist Church in Garland. Each action taken and every ministry performed must help expand God's kingdom, he said. To maximize their impact, Christians must work together in a spirit of unity.

The need for focus

"Even little drops of water grow strong when channeled," he said. "We need that kind of focus."

The Great Commission—Christ's directive to his disciples in Matthew 28—is great in scope, commanding Christians to make disciples of all people and all nations, said Ernest Dagohoy, pastor of First Philippine Baptist Church

in Missouri City. It's an outwardly focused, universal directive, he insisted.

"As Texas Baptists, we're called to move beyond our comfort zones and see the mass of lost humanity that surrounds us, particularly in this state where God has placed us," Dagohoy said. "We do not have to travel across the Pacific or Atlantic oceans to bring the gospel to all nations, because God has brought them to our doorstop, right here to Texas."

Jesus' promises to be with his followers "to the very end of the age," helping them as they pursue the Great Commission.

"We are not alone as we fulfill the Great Commission," Dagohoy said. "We have the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit, who will be there for us, who will never leave us or forsake us, who will be with us every step of the way. Acts 1:8 promises that we will receive power through the Holy Spirit to fulfill the Great Commission."

Jesse Rincones, executive director of the Hispanic Baptist Convention of Texas and pastor of Alliance Church in Lubbock, emphasized that unified desire to work together in sharing the gospel may strike others as odd. But that "weirdness" is the power of the Holy Spirit moving to reach the world and the state for Jesus Christ, he said,noting the Spirit's power is documented in the New Testament book of Acts.

Diversity and integraton

The diversity and integration of the Family Gathering may seem "weird" to some people, Rincones said. The way Baptists worship and express what they believe may seem abnormal. But "weird" does not have to be a bad thing, he stressed. It may simply mean God is doing his work in an extraordinary way.

"We want to make sure what happens is the same that happened in the

book of Acts,” he said, where numbers were added daily as people boldly proclaimed the gospel.