

Texas Baptist leaders participate in Rally for Life

January 28, 2020

AUSTIN—Baptist General Convention of Texas Executive Director David Hardage and BGCT President Michael Evans addressed a crowd of more than 20,000 people from the steps of the State Capitol during the Texas Rally for Life on Jan. 25.

Hardage brought greetings on behalf of Texas Baptist churches and read from Psalm 139:14, emphasizing God is the creator and giver of life.



David Hardage, executive director of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, brought greetings from Texas Baptists during the Texas Rally for Life at the Capitol. (Photo / Kinsey Oates)

“We stand not just in opposition to abortion, but we stand for something, and what we stand for is life,” Hardage said. “We believe in, and we support with all of our hearts, life.”

Evans offered a prayer of benediction at the rally.

Other program participants included Sylvia B. Johnson-Matthews, executive director/CEO of Houston Pregnancy Help Center; Jairo Sandoval-Pilego, pastor of San Jose Catholic Church in Austin; U.S. Representative Chip Roy; Claire Culwell, an abortion survivor; State Rep. Jeff Leach; Terry Beatley, president of the Hosea Initiative; and Joe Pojman, executive director of

Texas Alliance for Life.

The Texas Alliance for Life, a nonprofit organization that advocates for pro-life issues in the state, coordinated the rally on the south steps of the Capitol.

Worship service prior to the rally

Prior to the rally, Hardage and Evans participated in a celebration worship and prayer service at Hillcrest Church in Austin, coordinated by the Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission. The choir from Bethlehem Baptist Church in Mansfield, where Evans is senior pastor, performed at both the worship service and the rally.

During the worship service, Evans preached from Exodus 1 on the sanctity of life. He encouraged the crowd of more than 200 to “speak up for those who are speechless, to advocate on behalf of those who cannot advocate for themselves ... and to wave the banner of life.”

Evans noted the 47th anniversary of the landmark *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court decision, and he expressed sorrow for more than 60 million unborn children who were the victims of the “earth-shattering decision.”

“Our stance today is for life,” he said.

‘Every human being is precious’

Evans explained he was born out of wedlock.

“If ... [my parents] had taken my life, I would not have had the opportunity to contribute to the well-being of this society,” he said.

Evans expressed gratitude to his parents for choosing to give him life,

despite the many sacrifices it required, including his mother dropping out of college and his father enlisting in the military at a young age.

“Every human being is precious in the sight of our mighty God,” Evans said.

In Exodus 1, God remembered each life, he explained. Moses owed his life to women who did not follow the law of their government, which used genocide as a means of population control. After the two midwives ignored the decree of Pharaoh to kill male babies, God blessed them for their choices.

“God will bless us today. God will walk with us today,” Evans said. “He will encourage us. He has already gone before us. ... My prayer is that God would give you courage that on this day you will advocate for the lives of the unborn.”

‘God is faithful. Life is beautiful’

During the service, Katie Frugé, hunger and care ministry specialist with the CLC, also testified to the power of life through the birth of her three daughters. She told how God walked with her and her husband through her first pregnancy when they were told their daughter would be born with abnormalities. She then pointed to Eve, now age 8, who stood and waved from the front row.

During her second pregnancy, Frugé was again met with news of abnormalities, but she “leaned into an unknown future, trusting a known God.”

The couple named their second daughter Felicity and describe her as someone who brings joy to all who know her.

Then, Frugé was diagnosed with deadly stomach cancer at 31 and had her entire stomach removed.

“God is faithful. Life is beautiful,” Frugé testified.

Three years later, she gave birth to a third daughter, Noelle, who is 7 weeks old.

“We are happy and privileged to stand with you today,” Frugé said. “We have lived and experienced that life is worthy of celebration.”

Another program participant, Jayme Bates, a member of First Baptist Church in Georgetown, told her personal story of the pain and heartache she suffered after two abortions. Bates spoke about God’s redeeming power in her life as she became a Christian. She started a redemptive ministry to those who have been impacted by abortion.