

Texas Baptists seek to â€œEngageâ€œ Christians in making disciples

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GEORGETOWN—Proper evangelism means more than sharing the gospel. It involves making disciples—a process that affects multiple generations, Mike Woods, pastor of Coronado Baptist Church in El Paso, said during one of Texas Baptists’ Engage evangelism conferences.

Christians are called to pour their lives into non-Christians, sharing the hope of Christ and discipling them in the ways of the faith, Woods said. Christ’s Great Commission requires believers to be willing to invest in the lives of others for extended periods.

☒ That investment will have a multiplying effect, Woods noted. If a person leads one person to Christ every year for 32 years, that leads to 32 new Christians. But if a person properly disciplines one person a year for 32 years, leading to a chain of people who disciple others, 4 billion people will come to Christ. Generations will be affected.

“I can wrap my mind around sharing the gospel with one person and pouring my life into theirs for one year,” Woods said.

The investment of time and energy from a mature Christian into new believers can have a profound impact and is something younger generations are seeking, Woods said.

Millennials—the generation that reached adulthood around the start of the new millennium—are extremely relational and recognize older people have experience and wisdom from which they can learn. They seek out people

who can mentor them in life.

The same is true in spiritual matters, Woods said. Older generations can shape and mold younger people, teaching them based on their life experiences.

"We need to get a vision for our lives for younger generations," he said.

Woods was one of several featured speakers during Engage evangelism conferences across the state. The conferences focused on providing practical assistance in evangelism and inspiration for future evangelistic endeavors.

This year, members and ministers from more than 400 churches participated in evangelism conferences across the state, sponsored by the Baptist General Convention of Texas. Some of the Engage conferences have focused on the 4xfour evangelism model, and one of those conferences is scheduled to take place Aug. 15 in Lubbock. The evangelism conference in San Antonio focused on apologetics. The Engage conference in Tyler was postponed due to weather.

Congregations must remain "others-focused," said Lisa Burkett, children's minister at Crestview Baptist Church in Georgetown, in order to be effective evangelistically. Churches are meant to carry the gospel to the community and must be mindful of barriers they erect.

"One of the best things we can do is teach our people to think of others, to be others-focused," she said.