

Texas WMU encourages pursuit of God's calling

May 4, 2021

RICHARDSON—[Woman's Missionary Union of Texas](#) urged participants at its annual meeting and missions celebration to pursue God's calling on their lives.

The April 16-17 event at First Baptist Church in Richardson drew about 160 participants through a combination of in-person and online viewership at three general sessions, with in-person attendance limited for social distancing purposes.

"This weekend has not been about WMU of Texas," said Tamiko Jones, executive director-treasurer. "It has been about our God, your relationships with him and his call."

'Called to make a difference'

Raquel Contreras Eddinger, director general of the Baptist Spanish Publishing House, spoke from the Gospel of John, emphasizing that the time to pursue God's call is now.

"We have to leave our jar of water behind and run to tell everyone they need Jesus," she said, referencing the story of the woman at the well. "We, the women of WMU of Texas, are called to make a difference in our society."



NAMB Missionaries Ryan and Seané Rice speak about their ministry in New Orleans during the Texas WMU annual meeting and missions celebration in Richardson. (Texas Baptists Communication Photo)

Participants at the annual meeting and missions celebration also heard from Ryan and Seané Rice, North American Mission Board church planters in New Orleans.

“We have to trust that the Holy Spirit is guiding us as we pursue the Lord and that he wants to use us for his glory,” he said. “The hazard of the call of God may be great on our lives, but God is indeed greater.”

David and Laurel Fort, International Mission Board missionaries, also described their ministry in places across the globe. They emphasized the blessing of obedience to God’s call despite fear and challenges.

“Faith which leads to obedience calls us to trust that God is fully aware of the consequences of our obedience,” he said.

Participants heard from the 2021 National Acteens Panelists from Texas—Rana Seddik from Freeman Heights Baptist Church in Garland and

Hope Howard from Retama Park Baptist Church in Kingsville. These two young women were chosen by the national WMU for their hard work, dedication to missions education and faithful service.

“Missions are more effective when you do them as a team,” said Howard when asked about the importance of Acteens and Youth on Mission groups. “People see that, and it’s just such a witness-bearing testimony.”

Mary Hill Davis Offering essential in Texas

Baptist General Convention of Texas Executive Director David Hardage described the tremendous impact of the [Mary Hill Davis Offering for Texas Missions](#) on the missions and ministry of Texas Baptists.



BGCT Executive Director David Hardage describes the impact of the Mary Hill Davis Offering for Texas Missions. (Texas Baptist Communications Photo)

Hardage focused specifically on how Mary Hill Davis Offering funds support Texas Baptists' River Ministry and Mexico Missions, Baptist Student Ministry, Go Now Missions, International Mission Board missionaries and church planting.

"So much of the missions and ministry of the Baptist General Convention of Texas couldn't happen were it not for WMU of Texas and the Mary Hill Davis Offering," he said. "I believe in this offering. I give to it. I want to personally invite pastors to promote it harder and stronger than they ever have before in 2021."

Attendees also had the opportunity to participate in a self-guided Mary Hill Davis Offering Prayer Experience and received a 12-month WMU of Texas planner.

"You are going to have missions opportunities right there in front of you on your calendars," said Teri Ussery, missional lifestyle strategist for WMU of Texas. "We really hope that this is going to encourage, inspire and equip you to be on mission 365 days a year, seven days a week for the next 12 months."

The Pursue 2021 mission project provided supplies for students at Mendenhall Elementary in East Plano. Mendenhall serves about 600 students, and 86 percent are economically disadvantaged. Of the elementary schools in Plano, Mendenhall serves one of the highest percentages of families dealing with homelessness, single-parent homes, immigration, domestic violence, mental health issues and joblessness.

Over the course of the conference, participants donated basic supplies like clothes, masks and hygiene items, as well as monetary gifts to help care for the students and families of Mendenhall.

Taking care of business

During the business session of the annual meeting, Texas WMU re-elected Earl Ann Bumpus as president and elected Elida Salazar of First Baptist Church Carrizo Springs as vice president and Susan Morgan of Tallowood Baptist Church in Houston as recording secretary.

“We pray these leaders will walk into the future with confidence, knowing that [God has] already planned what they are to be about,” former Executive Director-Treasurer Carolyn Porterfield said during a prayer of dedication for the elected officers.

Jones recognized two former employees of Texas WMU who retired last year. Pam Poole served as special projects coordinator and joined the staff in 2014. Looie Biffar served as a graphic designer and joined the staff in 2015. Both served previously with the BGCT before joining Texas WMU.

Texas WMU also honored the memory of Rebecca “Becky” Ellison, former state consultant for Christian Women’s Job Corps and Christian Men’s Job Corps, who died in May 2020. The CWJC/CMJC Endowment, which began in 2002, was renamed the Becky Ellison CWJC/CMJC Endowment in honor of her life and ministry. Funds support various aspects of this ministry in which women and men learn job skills and life skills in a Christian context. Ellison’s husband Michael was in attendance and received gifts in her memory.