

BGCT president: Valley Baptist Missions Education Center

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The **Valley Baptist Missions Education Center** began in September 1947 when it opened as Valley Baptist Academy and has grown to a 90-acre campus in Harlingen.



René MacielIt now sits in the center of a region in deep South Texas populated by 2 million people from around the world.

Founded as a private Christian school and then as a missions training center, this Texas Baptist institution has clung to the principles of predominately educating and ministering to the Hispanic community.

When it was a school, students were trained for leadership in Christian work. Students from South Texas, Mexico, Central America and South America were sent or recommended to Valley Baptist Academy by pastors and supportive laypersons interested in advancing the cause of Christ. Students at the academy also were immersed in English as a Second Language and quickly gained fluency in English. They emerged from their studies to share their faith in Christ in two languages.

Graduates of both the academy and the education center are equipped with theological studies, as well as leadership and pastoral skills training. Many

graduates went on to become business professionals, pastors, attorneys, homemakers and medical professionals. Today, alumni share Christ across much of this continent.

Scores of men and women sacrificially served the academy and education center as educators, board members and staff. Most noteworthy was Howard E. Gary, who served as president 32 years. Under his outstanding leadership, the campus and educational enterprise experienced robust growth. Alongside a small number of short-term presidencies was the beloved Robert E. Smith, who served in critical times for the institution. As retired director of missions for Rio Grande Valley Baptist Association, he served as president more than seven years.

Just as John Cartwright Dunn Jr., an early Texas pioneer, implored Rufus Burleson, first president of Baylor University, to come to Texas when the region was just a wilderness, the staff and board of Valley Baptist Missions Education Center invite and implore people interested in exciting and life-changing missions opportunities and training to come to the center and to be part of a great movement of Christ in a diverse region of the state.

The center encourages an individual to come as a student of the Great Commission, as a pastor seeking enrichment and training, as a missions volunteer, or as an educator as the new leadership of Valley Baptist Missions Education Center develops opportunities of service and education certain to extend in influence for Christ around the world.

To learn more, click here. www.vbmec.org

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