

IN FOCUS: Thanks for Daehnert; now on to 2010

June 6, 2008

Jan Daehnert has retired from the Baptist General Convention of Texas again. But I hope it is not the last time. He recently served as interim executive director and then as interim associate executive director. I cannot imagine what it would have been like if it had not been for Jan.

Transitions always are challenging. This time may have been even more so because of the uncertainties of the finances. Jan, however, built staff confidence, led the Leadership Council and prepared the way for a new executive director.

Jan made tough calls but always showed wisdom, courage and kindness. Only God knows the ultimate kingdom good accomplished through him, but those who have worked with him are deeply grateful. The BGCT is stronger because of his leadership. We will miss him until we can find another reason to entice him to come back.

• Launching Texas Hope 2010

The BGCT will launch Texas Hope 2010 Sept. 20-28 on the border from El Paso to Brownsville. Pastors, directors of missions, church staff, Woman's Missionary Union and Texas Baptist Men will share the hope of Christ with folks living on the border, where we find many of the greatest needs and opportunities in Texas.

We will identify key leaders and resources and assess needs and challenges there. Are there communities without clean drinking water or neighborhoods where basic nutritional meals are not available? Are there individuals who have not heard of the hope of Christ? We will attempt to

meet some of those needs then and strengthen the partnerships that already exist.

Of course, Texas Baptists have been involved in sharing the hope of Christ throughout the convention's history. Brenda Sanders, with BGCT's Go Now Missions, sent me a note about one project already under way.

Robert Rueda, Baptist Student Ministry director at the University of Texas Pan Am, saw a vision for using summer missions to reach the Valley and train Hispanic leaders. This became the Valley Summer Project, and 11 students are participating.

- **Valley Summer Project**

Daniel Rangel, director of missions for Rio Grande Valley Baptist Association; Josué Valerio, leader of the BGCT Missions Team; Steve Seaberry, director of Texas Partnerships; and Go Now Missions worked together to make this happen.

The students will spend four weeks working in churches in the Valley, developing leadership skills. Then they will go to Venezuela as part of the BGCT partnership. In Valencia, they will spend 12 days working with a church, "doing the same type of work they have been trained for and leading in the Valley," Brenda said.

They will be our first collegiate team to participate in the Venezuela partnership, and Robert hopes to have a retreat with the students in which they get to meet with Hispanic leaders from across our state.

"This is a beautiful picture of missions in our backyard that leads to missions to the nations," Brenda said.

By the grace of God, Texas Hope 2010 will transform not only our state but also the world.

Randel Everett is executive director of the Baptist General Convention of Texas Executive Board.