

IN TOUCH: A Christian, history & a thought

June 8, 2012

Hello, Texas Baptists! I have completed my second Executive Board meeting, and I'm delighted so many people give of their time to serve our convention. Our Executive Board chairman is Van Christian, pastor of First Baptist Church in Comanche (www.fbccomanche.com). I met Van when we served on what the Baptist General Convention of Texas used to call the State Missions Commission. I appreciate Van's leadership and encourage you to pray for him.

Kathleen and I attended a family funeral at Clearwater Baptist Church in Scroggins, where my father, Bill Hardage, has been serving as pastor and minister of music 13 years. We took time to stop in at Pine Street Baptist Church in Winnsboro, where Charles Etheridge has been pastor 30 years, and then First Baptist Church in Sulphur Springs (www.ssfb.org), where I was pastor almost 14 years. Mark Bryant now is leading this great church.

David Hardage

A big "thank you" to Randall Everett, pastor of First Baptist Church in Midland (www.fbc-midland.org) and his staff for coming to the Baptist Building for their annual staff retreat. It was a delight having them here, and I hope we proved to be a blessing to them. And remember, if your church needs to have a meeting in the Metroplex, your Baptist Building awaits. We'd love to host you.

Every year, the first Sunday of June, at Independence Baptist Church near Brenham, the Elder Statesman Award is presented to a Texas Baptist who has been active and involved in the work and ministry of the BGCT, particularly related to education. This year, Fred Roach, a member of The

Heights Church in Richardson (www.theheights.org) deservedly was honored. It was a great morning of music, preaching and fellowship. Plus, the Independence Baptist Church family provides a great lunch. Pastor Phil Hassell also serves as curator of our Texas Baptist Historical Museum (www.texasbaptists.org/texasbaptisthistoricalcollection). Sam Houston was baptized here and was a member of the church. You can see where he carved his initials in the pew where he sat!

Next year, I encourage you to come and be a part of this special day. There is so much history at Independence. Texas Baptist work started there. Baylor University and the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor trace their roots to Independence, and parts of the old campuses remain and are being restored and upgraded. And just a few miles away at Washington on the Brazos, you can visit the birthplace of Texas. It's an experience worth your time, and I hope you'll put it on the calendar for 2013. It's on mine already!

Finally, just a thought: After watching the History Channel's mini-series *Hatfields & McCoys*, I'm wondering if we'd do well to make sure Stephen Hatfield, pastor of First Baptist Church in Lewisville, and Joel McCoy, pastor of First Baptist Church in Crowley, never serve on the same committee!

David Hardage is executive director of the Baptist General Convention of Texas Executive Board.