

René Maciel: DBU, ETBU 'do a wonderful job'

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Count your blessings! We have many students who come through our Texas Baptist universities who are called and prepare for ministry. Many go on to a Texas Baptist seminary or Christian ministry program and then into a Texas Baptist church. Texas Baptist universities prepare so many of our pastors and ministers. And your Cooperative Program giving supports all our 28 institutions and provides needed help for many students to receive scholarships and aid as they attend our universities.



René Maciel Here are two more of our Texas Baptist schools that do a wonderful job educating and preparing many for ministry and other vocations. I am grateful I have a chance to relate to these universities at different times throughout the year and thankful for the wonderful programs and schools Texas Baptists can count as a blessing.

Dallas Baptist University began in 1898 in Decatur as Decatur Baptist College, often considered the oldest continuously operated junior college west of the Mississippi River. Dallas Baptists were interested in starting a Baptist college in Dallas to serve the Metroplex's growing population, so in 1965 it moved with 945 students to a 200-acre site in southwest Dallas and was renamed Dallas Baptist College. It became a four-year institution for

the 1967-68 academic year.



A former U.S. Cabinet member and chief of staff to President Lyndon B. Johnson, Marvin Watson, became president in 1979 and led the college toward university status by adding the first graduate programs. DBC became Dallas Baptist University in

1985, but it endured extreme financial hardship.

The university hovered on the brink of closure, but it was saved through the support of the Dallas Baptist Association, the Baptist General Convention of Texas, and devoted faculty and staff. History credits Fred White, a former Texas Baptist pastor who served in various administrative posts during DBC's first 20 years in Dallas, with championing the survival of DBC.



In 1988, Gary Cook's presidency re-energized the school. By 1992, the debt was totally eliminated, and 92 more acres were added. Enrollment reached 5,319 by the fall of 2015. Among those are 588 international students representing 62 countries. DBU provides 72 undergraduate majors, 28 master's programs and two doctoral degrees. Cook is now the school's first chancellor as trustees search for the next president.

East Texas Baptist University traces its beginning to the College of Marshall, which started as a two-year institution in 1917 with 374 students. The campaign to create the college was led by William Thomas Tardy, pastor of First Baptist Church in Marshall. He acquired land, and the BGCT assumed control of the college. In 1944, trustees asked the state convention to elevate the college to four-year status, and the name was

changed to East Texas Baptist College. In 1984, it became East Texas Baptist University.

ETBU's current enrollment is 1,308, and it offers more than 40 programs of study and graduate studies in business, counseling, education, Christian studies and religion. J. Blair Blackburn became its 13th president last June, after serving at DBU 20 years—13 as executive vice president.



ETBU's Great Commission Center deploys students, faculty and staff into mission endeavors through Beach Reach on South Padre Island, at Mission Marshall, and with Hope Springs Water, to repair water wells and offer hygiene clinics in Belize. Its nursing students have a 100 percent pass rate on the national exam, and teacher education graduates boasted a 97 percent state licensure exam pass rate for 2013-14.

Please keep these universities in your prayers and make plans to find out more about them at our BGCT annual meeting, Nov. 13-15.

René Maciel is president of the Baptist General Convention of Texas and president of Baptist University of the Americas in San Antonio.