

David Hardage: Texas Baptists are doing 'extensive and exciting' work

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Since 2012, David Hardage has served as the executive director of [Texas Baptists](#) (The Baptist General Convention of Texas). From deep in the heart of one Texan, he shares his background and thoughts on leading Texas Baptists. To suggest a Baptist General Convention of Texas-affiliated leader to be featured in this column, or to apply to be featured yourself, [click here](#).

Background

Where else have you worked, and what were your positions?

I have been the pastor of four churches. The last was FBC Sulphur Springs for 14 years.

I was director of missions of the Waco Regional Baptist Association and then director of development for Truett Seminary.

Where did you grow up?

I grew up in Texas, mostly West Texas. I call Lamesa my hometown.

How did you come to faith in Christ?

I came to faith in Christ at the age of nine in Duncan, Oklahoma, on the first Tuesday night of the year 1966.

Where were you educated, and what degrees did you receive?

I received a Bachelor of Arts from Baylor University, a Master of Divinity from Southwestern Seminary and a Doctor of Ministry from Midwestern Seminary in Kansas City.

Ministry/Profession

Why do you feel called to your particular vocation?

I feel called to this role because of the Lord's leading, the door opening and people I know and trust believing in me. I never had any expectations or aspirations to serve in this role but am honored to do so.

Please tell us about your BGCT institution—the breadth and nature of its work, including its mission, measures of scope, etc.

The BGCT is made of 5400 churches, of all kinds, all across Texas (and beyond) who share resources to do partnership ministry and missions. Our work is extensive and exciting.

What do you like best about leading your institution? Why?

I like the people I am able to serve with on our staff. They are good people who love the Lord, his church and the lost, and are devoted to Texas Baptists!

What aspect(s) of your institution and/or its mission do you wish more people understood?

I do wish more people had a grasp of the scope of our ministry. We are touching lives in numerous ways all over Texas.

How has your institution and its mission changed since you began your career?

We have changed the location of our primary offices and decentralized our

operation some with offices in Waco, Austin, San Antonio and, soon, Houston. We have reorganized around five primary ministry teams and have developed some exciting mission partnerships with Brazilian Baptists and Mexican Baptists.

How do you expect your institution and/or its mission to change in the next 10 to 20 years?

I would expect us to continue to become more decentralized as the Texas population continues to grow. Also, we'll become more diverse as a staff to reflect the people of Texas. And, we'll continue to fine-tune our organization to meet the changing world in which we live. Change will be our only constant.

Name the three most significant challenges and/or influences facing your institution.

Keeping up with the pace of change in Texas, the church and society is a challenge.

Resourcing our work and ministry is also a challenge, as is maintaining a sense of relevancy to the new/next generations.

What one aspect of your job gives you the greatest joy or fulfillment?

I still love preaching in a different Texas Baptist church every Sunday. Every week is fascinating.

About Baptists

What are the key issues facing Baptists?

Maintaining a sense of relevancy to a changing world. Holding on to

biblical authority with grace and peace.

However, the biggest challenge has not changed in decades, and that is sharing the Good News of Jesus with those who do not know him. This will always be our priority!

What would you change about the Baptist denomination—state, nation or local?

If I could change anything, it would be establishing a renewed sense and spirit of cooperation. We have missed a generation or two in talking about the practice and power of cooperation.

About David

Who were/are your mentors, and how did/do they influence you?

I grew up in a pastor's home, so my father was the foundation for my ministry perspective. As I became involved in Texas Baptists' work, I always appreciated the leadership of Charles Lee Williamson, Bill Roe (the first DOM I ever knew) and then, of course, Bill Pinson, Ken Coffee and James Semple.

Other than the Bible, name some of your favorite books or authors, and explain why.

I enjoy reading the works of Dr. Jim Denison. I really appreciate his cultural relevancy from a biblical worldview.

What is your favorite Bible verse or passage? Why?

Psalm 1:1-3. These are words to live by!

Who is your favorite Bible character, other than Jesus? Why?

I always like reading the story of David. He was set apart for a purpose, imperfect in many ways, but wholly committed to the Lord and used in powerful ways.

Name something about you that would surprise people who know you well.

I can throw a baseball, equally well, with both arms.

If you could get one “do over” in your career, what would it be, and why?

I would not play football in high school. I was too small and slow!