

Voices: Finding my home in the Texas Baptists family

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Since January, I've had the privilege of serving as pastor at First Baptist Church in Lewisville. While my wife, Jacki, and I initially thought it might be an unexpected fit, the Holy Spirit made it clear this was the path for us.

One aspect that initially felt unfamiliar was the church's affiliation with Texas Baptists—or the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

My background primarily involved churches affiliated with the other state convention in Texas. Honestly, what I'd heard about Texas Baptists in the past, including its schools and institutions, caused some concern. However, I'm happy to report those concerns were unfounded.

Six months later: My experience with Texas Baptists

Here are some amazing things I've discovered in just six months as part of the Texas Baptists family:

Warm welcome

The convention embodies true Texas hospitality. When I accepted the call, I was overwhelmed by the warm welcome from pastors and staff across the state. Complete strangers reached out with calls, texts and cards, offering support and even taking me to lunch. They truly exemplify the spirit of "all are welcome."

There were no theological interrogations or judgments. My education and

background weren't a concern. I simply was welcomed as a fellow pastor.

Convicted centrists

Some might describe Texas Baptists as leaning slightly less conservative, but labels can be divisive. What I've found is a group that embraces a thoughtful, centered approach. They understand the importance of avoiding extremes.

These are people of strong convictions, deeply rooted in Scripture, who demonstrate compassion and humility on nonessential matters.

Mission-driven

Sharing the good news of Jesus with those in need is their top priority. They're not focused on building empires or agendas. The focus is on partnering together to serve others. Mission truly comes first with Texas Baptists.

Gospel-focused

They keep the core message of the gospel at the forefront. I've witnessed leaders with tears in their eyes sharing stories about baptisms at Beach Reach or churches planted through the Missionary Adoption Program.

Even prominent pastors prioritize sharing the gospel with children at summer camps. Spend any time with a Texas Baptist, and you're likely to spend it talking about the amazing grace of Jesus.

Incredible resources

The Texas Baptists network offers a vast array of resources, unlike any other state convention I'm aware of. From River Ministry and Texas Baptists student ministries to the Christian Life Commission and the Center for Cultural Engagement—there's so much support available to affiliated

churches.

Networked and supportive

I've been incredibly impressed by the accessibility and connection within Texas Baptists leadership. This is a stark contrast to some experiences I've had in other networks, where access seemed limited or dependent on specific connections.

In Texas, calls are returned, meetings are scheduled, and help is readily offered. Even though First Baptist Church in Lewisville isn't a large or influential church by state standards, none of that matters.

There's a genuine spirit of cooperation and a shared desire to serve others for the glory of God.

Finding the right fit

Texas Baptists isn't perfect, and there are many other excellent Baptist networks and associations. For me, however, I was looking for partners who truly would support churches and lead with integrity. I'm grateful to have found that in the Texas Baptists family.

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