

BGCT begins effort to craft vision for the future_22304

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BGCT begins effort to craft vision for the future

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Texas Baptist Communications

DALLAS—The Baptist General Convention of Texas has launched a process of “revisioning” that is expected to lead to reorganization of the convention’s work.

BGCT Executive Director Charles Wade announced the formation of four “revisioning teams” that will help shape a new vision for the BGCT.

He created four teams of 10 to 13 people each. Two groups consist of pastors, one younger and one older; one is comprised of laypeople; and another includes Executive Board staff members.

“I wanted to bring together a broad variety of our Texas Baptist people to seek God’s vision for our future,” Wade said. “Three years ago, we made some changes in our organizational structure, and we have seen welcome improvements. The time is right for us to look at what the role of our convention will be in the years ahead.”

Wade expressed appreciation to BGCT President Ken Hall and other officers for “their encouragement in seeing that the convention move

forward aggressively in responding to the challenges presented by a changing Texas and by a world in desperate need of the gospel.”

“The officers and I desire the best Texas Baptists can do,” he said.

The revisioning teams will identify critical issues facing the convention and churches, provide opinions regarding priorities and suggest “possible models for organization,” said Chris Liebrum, director of human resources.

“We need a clearer vision that we can build toward, a vision that is so clear, so compelling it will communicate to all Texas Baptists a positive direction for the future,” he said.

Each team will meet the week of March 1-5 and hold three meetings by the middle of April, Wade said.

“The results of their work will flow to the executive director’s office, where we will develop a strategic plan and begin to work on structure and organizational solutions that will move us forward in achieving the vision God sets before us,” he said.

The BGCT Executive Board will receive reports on the revisioning process at its May and September meetings.

Sherrill Spies, a member of First Baptist Church in The Woodlands with experience in strategic planning and organizational design, will guide the process, Liebrum said, noting, “Not only does she know organizations, she knows Texas Baptists.”

All regions of the state are represented in the revisioning process, Liebrum said. The teams also have ethnic and gender diversity.

“Dr. Wade has spent a lot of time in prayer and in consultation with Texas Baptists in order to find the right people,” he said.

“Most of all,” Wade said, “we looked for people who believe God has given them a calling to do what they do. They each have a desire for the BGCT to be the most effective force for God and good it can possibly be as it serves the local churches and collaborates with our institutions and associations.

“Ultimately, all that the BGCT does should point toward salvation of the lost and growth of the churches unto the glory of God. Each of these team members shares that desire.”

The revisioning teams will address various questions, Wade said. They include:

“How can the BGCT be used of God to encourage in churches the most effective advances in evangelism, missions, Christian education and benevolent ministries?”

- ◆ “How can we provide a vision of Christ and Baptist identity that stirs up a zeal for what God wants to do with us as we work together?”

- ◆ “If the BGCT could be whatever God needs us to be, what kind of difference could we make in churches, in Texas and in the world unto the glory of God?”

- ◆ “How can we help Texas Baptists work together in the most spiritually powerful and effective manner possible?”

For the laity team, Wade sought lay leaders with “extensive experience in business,” people who have “demonstrated skills in organizing business structures for the most efficient and effective use of resources in achieving goals,” he said.

The work of churches and the convention is more than a business, but “things good business minds have learned can be beneficial to us in the work of our convention,” he said. “Where there are better ways to do what

we do, we want to know about it.”

The two teams of ministerial leaders will bring a pastoral perspective, he added.

“One group is a bit older, and the other a bit younger,” Wade said. “We wanted to gain input from pastors who have spent a lifetime learning and leading in local churches, and we also wanted input from younger ministers who have a deep sense of calling to the future God holds out before us.”

Executive Board staff members comprise the fourth group. “These men and women know our Baptist work from the inside out,” Wade said. “I have found they have some of the most creative ideas regarding the opportunities before our churches and convention. We want to have the benefit of their best thinking.”

Wade also will seek input from associational directors of missions, presidents of BGCT-affiliated institutions and seminary students.

“I pray daily God will use us to help Texas Baptist churches be all that God wants them to be and to empower us in advancing all the interests of the Redeemer’s kingdom,” Wade said. “My deepest desire is that we help one another so that our churches know themselves to be the presence of Christ in the world.”

Revisioning and reorganization are a never-ending process, Liebrum said, noting, “We will continue to monitor and evaluate.”

Team members are:

- ◆ Laity team—Jim Adams, Trinity Baptist Church, San Antonio; Ed Alvarado, First Baptist Church, Donna; Mike Caraway, Southland Baptist Church, San Angelo; Bob Fowler, South Main Baptist Church, Houston; John Hicks, First Baptist Church, Amarillo; Dale Jones, Park Cities Baptist

Church, Dallas; Clifford Martin, Bethlehem Baptist Church, Mansfield; Camille Miller, First Baptist Church, Austin; and Margarita Treviño, First Baptist Church, Keller.

- ◆ Pastors team 1—Mario Gonzalez, Iglesia Primera Bautista, El Paso; Stephen Hatfield, First Baptist Church, Lewisville; Travis Hart, First Baptist Church, Plainview; Don Higginbotham, First Baptist Church, Harlingen; Carl Hudson, Little River Baptist Church, Rockdale; Charles Johnson, Trinity Baptist Church, San Antonio; Peter Leong, Southwest Chinese Baptist Fellowship, Stafford; Phil Lineberger, Williams Trace Baptist Church, Sugar Land; David Mahfouz, First Baptist Church, Port Neches; Rodney McGlothlin, First Baptist Church, College Station; Joseph Parker, David Chapel Missionary Baptist Church, Austin; Randall Scott, Immanuel Baptist Church, Paris; and Candy Smith, First Baptist Church, Richardson.

- ◆ Pastors team 2—Carlos Alsina, Iglesia Primera Bautista, Austin; Ann Bell, Wilshire Baptist Church, Dallas; Ken Blake, Westside Baptist Church, Lewisville; Tony Celelli, Second Baptist Church, Corpus Christi; Russell Diwa, Biblical Community Church, Garland; John Durham, First Baptist Church, Irving; Lance Freeman, LifePointe Baptist Church, The Woodlands; Kevin Hall, First Baptist Church, Haskell; Kyle Henderson, First Baptist Church, Athens; Mark Newton, First Baptist Church, San Marcos; John Petty, Trinity Baptist Church, Kerrville; and Bruce Webb, Central Baptist Church, Jacksonville.

- ◆ Staff team—Carol Bowman, Colleen Brooks, Keith Crouch, Jan Daehnert, Michael Evans, David Guel, Ron Gunter, Patty Lane, Milfred Minatrea, Andre Punch, Gus Reyes, Tom Ruane and Rhonda Walden.

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