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German Baptists emphasize cooperation

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DALLAS-The "richness of God" is shown through the cooperation of his people, German Baptist leaders said during a Baptist General Convention of Texas prayer meeting.

"I think human beings are made to think everyone should be like me," said Siegfried Grossman, president of the Union of Evangelical Free Church Congregations of Germany.

But "I think it is sinful if we believe everyone has to be the same because God has given us such diversity," he said.

People with different gift sets, viewpoints, cultures and nationalities can complement each other to further the kingdom of God, Grossman continued. Each person brings particular strengths that can help others where they are weak.

"Ten Texans are good, but seven Texans and three Germans would be interesting too," he said, speaking from 1 Corinthians 12.

The Germans' appearance at the BGCT prayer meeting was part of their trip to observe Texas Baptists' ministry techniques. Germany is facing some of the issues Texas has been dealing with for some time, said Regina Claas, executive director of the German union.

Germany is becoming increasingly multicultural and unfamiliar with the gospel, she said. German believers are trying to find ways to share their faith that are relevant to their culture.

German leaders have been impressed with the way Texas Baptists share their faith, Claas said, noting spiritual conversations are common in Texas.

The Germans met with a variety of convention staff members and Texas Baptist leaders during their stay.

"We are learning a lot from you people," Claas said.

BGCT Executive Director Charles Wade, who served as a pastor at an English-speaking international Baptist church in Germany, praised the steadfastness of the German union's commitment to Christian service. He said they are "courageous" in trying to minister throughout Germany.

Cooperation among Christians worldwide is the spiritual side of globalization, Grossman said. Communication and travel are faster than any other time in history, and many believers around the world are facing similar issues. A cooperative Baptist family presents a positive image of God.

"We have arrived at a time when we can see the richness of God in the diversity of creation," he said.

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