

# **TOGETHER: BGCT: Working separately & together**

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Have you ever watched three or four friends build something on a free Saturday? If they're smart, they start early, divvy up the work in a way that best suits their talents and go to work. They don't all do the same thing at the same time. They work both separately and together; and, in the end, if they've worked well, they build something that will last.

Baptists are like those building friends. We come together, divvy up the work and go at it. Churches and conventions work both separately and together; and, in the end, we've built something special. Of course, we know that it is God building through us, but we surely are part of the work (1 Corinthians 3:9).



Executive Director  
BGCT Executive  
Board

The Baptist General Convention of Texas helps churches in a unified project of kingdom building; but churches are the most important element. Together, we're like those building friends. We've got a job to do, and it sure helps to have friends helping. It makes the effort more enjoyable, and you get a lot more done.

Many people today just do not grasp how Baptists work. It's hard for them to understand that churches, the BGCT, and other Baptist bodies can all be autonomous and yet work together—having a kingdom goal and working cooperatively.

When we see friends working on weekend building projects, we know each one of them is an autonomous individual who will make his own decisions. But we also know those friends cooperate, or they will not get as much done. Before they came together to work that morning, each got out of bed in his own house, and at the end of the day, will return there. They have their own individual lives, but they choose to do some things together because it's enjoyable and productive.

That's what Baptist groups are like. Each is autonomous, but we choose to come together and work because it's a joy and it's productive.

The BGCT, national bodies and regional associations do not tell churches what to do, nor do they tell each other what to do. They're autonomous, but they cooperate where they can.

Disagreements that have divided Baptists in recent years have had some particularly grievous consequences in harming cooperation and trust, but our polity of autonomy still enables us to move forward in kingdom work.

Baptists, despite our struggles, still are seeking to reach people for Christ through missions and evangelism; we're still trying to disciple the saved; and we're still trying to meet the needs of a hurting world.

At the national level, the BGCT is not joined at the hip with either the Southern Baptist Convention or the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. The BGCT makes its own decisions in seeking to best serve the churches of Texas and the needs of the world. But we also know we are not alone. That's why we cooperate where we can with each group; and where we can't, we go our own way, the way that Texas Baptists say they want to go together.

The Baptist churches of Texas work together through the BGCT on the same eternal project. We work as friends, but we don't all do the same thing all of the time. It's the Baptist way, and it's a very effective way.

We are loved.

*Charles Wade is executive director of the Baptist General Convention of Texas.*

News of religion, faith, missions, Bible study and Christian ministry among Texas Baptist churches, in the BGCT, the Southern Baptist Convention ( SBC ) and around the world.