

Texas Baptist leaders applaud call for inclusive convocation

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By Barbara Bedrick

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ATLANTA—Texas Baptist leaders affirmed former President Jimmy Carter's call for an inclusive convocation of North American Baptists next year.

Baptist General Convention of Texas Executive Director Charles Wade joined Carter and more than 80 leaders of about 40 Baptist groups in announcing plans for convocation, tentatively slated for Jan. 30-Feb.1, 2008, in Atlanta.

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Some BGCT leaders joined representatives from the [Baptist World Alliance](#), [American Baptist Churches](#), [National Baptist Convention USA](#), [Canadian Baptist Ministries](#), [Cooperative Baptist Fellowship](#) and other groups last April in signing the [North American Baptist Covenant](#), a document that reaffirms traditional Baptist values and calls for cooperation.

“There was a time when Baptists in America worked together across the nation,” Wade said. “That unity was lost in the middle 19th century. It was a thrilling experience to see Baptists of every race and ethnicity in North America working together and affirming a Baptist covenant to speak biblically and prophetically to our cultures. This is a call for Baptists to address the needs of the world.”

BGCT President Steve Vernon also voiced his support for the new Baptist alliance, which unifies Baptists across racial, geographical and theological lines into a network to address social ills and share the gospel.

“It excites me. I see it as a positive thing that will help the cause of Baptists and of Christ across the nation,” Vernon said. “I think what has happened is that across the nation the voice of Baptists has been perceived as the Southern Baptist Convention. The new national alliance will broaden the voice of Baptists and be more inclusive of all strains of Baptists. This alliance is more reflective of who Baptists are.”

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