

Wade recounts struggles, strides in his tenure as BGCT executive director

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Surrounded by family, Charles Wade prepares to deliver his final report to the Baptist General Convention of Texas as executive director. He will retire Jan. 31, 2008.

(PHOTO/Robert Rogers/Baylor University)

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tenure as BGCT executive director

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MARILLO—In his final executive director’s report to the Baptist General Convention of Texas, Charles Wade reviewed his time in that role, saying he would have handled some things a bit differently, but he insisted he essentially would have made the same decisions.

“We have been through a lot of change in our staff assignments. ... I really thought we could get through the change and to a new synergy within two years. It has been more like four years,” he acknowledged.

Due to a lack of funds, 29 full-time BGCT Executive Board staff positions were eliminated recently.

“I will tell you this,” Wade said. “There is no good way to downsize a staff. It is important to offer the best severance, job placement services and retirement packages you feel you can, and that is right to do. But it still hurts, and it takes time to recover.”

He added that BGCT staff love the churches, are ready for the future and will be great partners for the new executive director.

Wade also reviewed the goals he worked for at the BGCT and noted the strides made.

“I wanted us to get our arms around Texas and hug this state up close to God,” he said. “I have seen congregations who have taken seriously the challenge to ask themselves, ‘If Jesus came to our town, to whom would he go?’

“I wanted our presence in Austin through our Christian Life Commission to be an increasing blessing and witness to Christ on behalf of all Christians and people of good will.”

The moral concerns and public policy agency is “recognized by Texas legislators as the source of honest, intelligent, carefully researched information that can help them make the best decisions possible,” Wade said.

“I wanted to see the growing diversity of the population in Texas and play to make our staff, our church starts, our leadership look more like the face of Texas. I wanted Texas Baptists to be friends with an encouragement to Baptists around the world.”

Wade wanted BGCT to remain faithful to historic Baptist principles and emphasize its passion for evangelism, missions and ministry, gospel preaching and strong servant leadership models.

“I wanted to encourage our Texas Baptist institutions, strengthen good relationships between them, collaboration on mutually helpful assignments and engagement with local churches so that our sense of partnership could grow and be mutually beneficial,” he said.

“I wanted pastors and their families to feel valued, encouraged and blessed. I wanted BGCT staff to be closer to the churches and associations available, resourceful, strategic and able to evaluate where we are being helpful and valuable and where we are not.”

Wade has served as executive director since 1999. He will begin his retirement on Feb. 1. A search committee is in place to fill the post.

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