

# **Voices: Celebrating the ties between BGCT churches and institutions**

March 24, 2020

## **Recognizing churches**

Hello, Texas Baptists!

A couple of months ago, when life and church were relatively normal, I had the opportunity to preach the Sunday morning worship service for the First Baptist Church of Galveston. The occasion was the church's 180th anniversary.

First Baptist Church in Galveston began in 1840 with nine charter members. One of the early converts and faithful members of the Galveston church was Gail Borden of Borden Dairy. The anniversary was a very special day as First Baptist Galveston is one of the BGCT's oldest congregations.

The church was started by Pastor James Huckins. Huckins later would help First Baptist Church of Houston get started. Huckins was the first missionary to Texas, having been sent by the American Baptist Home Mission Society.

## **Recognizing institutions**

On the same day I was in Galveston, Craig Christina, our associate executive director, was attending the Anderson Baptist Church just east of

Navasota for Institutional Recognition Sunday. This new recognition began in 2019 at the Anderson Baptist Church.

Institutional Recognition Sunday is set aside to recognize institutions begun by or that are part of our Texas Baptist family. We recognize these institutions in order of their founding.

I'm grateful to Alan Lefever, the director of the Texas Baptists' Historical Collection, and his staff for having the idea and doing the planning.

Last year, the University of Mary-Hardin Baylor was recognized, and this year, Baylor University was recognized. Both UMHB and Baylor celebrate their 175th anniversaries this year.

We were so delighted the presidents of both universities and other key leaders were present for the special recognition.

The recognitions are held at the Anderson Baptist Church because that's where the Baptist General Convention of Texas was formed in 1886. Texas Baptists were around long before then, but during a gathering of five different Baptist conventions in Anderson, they decided to bond together and form one convention, the BGCT.

Pastor Kyle Childress and the Anderson Baptist Church family are so kind and gracious in their hosting.

## **Church and institutional ties**

A unique thing about these two events happening on the same day is James Huckins also was one of the three founders of Baylor University and UMHB, along with William Tryon and Judge R.E.B. Baylor. James Huckins was very instrumental in helping Baptists in Texas get started and make a difference for the kingdom of God.

Since those early days, Texas Baptists have been diligent in starting and supporting institutions and churches and have done so quite effectively and efficiently.

If you'd like to be part of next year's celebration at Anderson, please note it will take place on the last Sunday of January, and Howard Payne University will be recognized. It will be another great Sunday.

*David Hardage is the executive director of the Baptist General Convention of Texas. The BGCT and Baptist Standard are independently related partners.*