

BGCT board removes CBF as recognized giving option

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DALLAS—The Baptist General Convention of Texas Executive Board wants Texas Baptist churches that financially support the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship to send those contributions directly to the Fellowship—not to the BGCT.

In response to a hiring policy change at CBF that opens certain jobs to LGBT individuals, the BGCT Executive Board voted to revise its contribution forms to delete CBF as a Cooperative Program giving option and remove CBF Global Missions as a recognized designated offering.

“In light of CBF’s governing board vote, we believe it is proper and prudent to remove CBF as a giving option from the BGCT gift remittance form and to encourage churches to send their CBF gifts directly to the CBF national office,” according to the recommendation the finance committee and administration support committee jointly presented to the BGCT Executive Board.

No board members raised questions about the recommendation during the general session, and Chairman Dennis Young, pastor of Missouri City Baptist Church near Houston, noted only one vote in opposition.

The BGCT allows churches to indicate on a giving form how they want to direct the worldwide portion of the funds they send to the state convention’s Cooperative Program unified budget. CBF has been a BGCT Cooperative Program giving option since 1994, and CBF Global Missions has been a designated offering option since 1997.

Paynter: ‘Deeply disappointing’

Last year, 349 Texas Baptist churches gave more than \$1 million to CBF through the BGCT—\$776,981 as a worldwide cooperative giving option and \$315,862 to CBF Global Missions.

CBF Executive Coordinator Suzii Paynter, who served previously on the BGCT Executive Board staff as director of the Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission, called the decision “deeply disappointing” but pledged CBF would continue to work with Baptists in Texas.

“CBF will continue beautiful collaboration with Baptists in Texas, including with 18 missionaries with Texas ties serving on three continents, as well as starting new Texas churches, providing scholarships for Texas students, combatting rural poverty along the Texas-Mexico border and in many other ministry areas,” Paynter said.

“While this decision by the BGCT Executive Board is deeply disappointing for how it changes the cooperative method by which Texas Baptist churches support CBF, it will not change our prayerful expectation that churches will support CBF directly as a mission-sending organization to more than 30 countries around the world.”

Contrary to ‘long-held positions’ on sex and marriage

The BGCT board acted after the CBF Governing Board recently adopted a [revised hiring policy](#) and implementation procedure that allows LGBT individuals to be considered for some staff positions but maintains limits on missions and ministry leadership personnel.

The CBF board adopted the new policy as part of a two-part

recommendation from CBF's [Illumination Project](#) Committee, created to examine how the Fellowship could respond to cultural changes—particularly regarding human sexuality.

Soon after the CBF board approved the Illumination Project Committee reports and its recommendations, the BGCT issued a [statement](#): “While we understand and respect the decision-making process undertaken, BGCT affirms our long-held position on biblical sexuality and marriage. We believe the Bible teaches that any sexual relationship outside the bounds of a marriage between a man and woman is sin. Texas Baptists value every human individual, and our churches will continue to be loving, respectful and welcoming to all people.”

Paynter expressed her hope Texas Baptist churches would keep in mind the CBF missions personnel serving globally.

“Much has been said from across the spectrum related to the implementation of CBF's new Christ-centered [hiring policy](#), but one thing is for sure—what unites us is nothing other than our mission to advance the cause of Christ,” she said.

“I hope rather than making immediate decisions related to funding to the detriment of CBF missionaries serving all over the world, Texas Baptist pastors and lay leaders would give to CBF directly and would enter into conversation with us.”

Let go of selfishness and sinfulness

During his remarks to the board, BGCT President Danny Reeves, pastor of First Baptist Church in Corsicana, challenged Texas Baptists to “get to know God in a deeper way—in the depths God deserves to be known.”

If Texas Baptists want to be considered friends of God, as the Old

Testament patriarch Abraham was known, they need to let everything go—particularly selfishness and sinfulness, Reeves said.

Pointing to the Genesis account of God's judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah, Lot addressed the men of Sodom as "friends," even when they sought to sexually assault his guests, he noted.

"Who do we as God's church call friends?" Reeves asked. "Who do we as Texas Baptists consider to be our friends?"

Study possibility of meeting every other year

The board also voted to task the BGCT Executive Board staff to study the feasibility of moving from an annual meeting to a biennial state convention, with a possible discipleship and evangelism event scheduled on alternate years.

The task force will report its findings to the board's executive committee in May, who will report to the full BGCT Executive Board.

In other business, the board moved two institutional board members from board-elected positions to BGCT-elected positions—Anne Halbert of First Baptist Church in Waco to the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor board of trustees and Paul McClinton of Columbus Avenue Baptist Church in Waco to the Baylor Scott & White-Hillcrest board of trustees.

The board also filled vacancies on several councils, electing:

- Abe Jaquez of First Baptist Church in Sunnyvale to the Hispanic Education Initiative Council.

- David Ritsema of First Baptist Church in Waxahachie and Yolanda Young of The Cross Baptist Church in Tyler to the Baptist Student Ministry Council.
- Robby Barrett of First Baptist Church in Amarillo, Jill Fulghum of Southland Baptist Church in San Angelo and Larry Soape of First Baptist Church in San Antonio to the BaptistWay Press Advisory Council.
- Darrell Beggs of Central Baptist Church in Hillsboro to the Connections Council.
- Eron Green of First Baptist Church in Beeville to the Missions Mobilization Coordinating Council.
- Nick Swinford of Cross Brand Cowboy Church in Tyler, Dan Jones of Triple Cross Cowboy Church of Hood County in Granbury, Marcy Grun of Bluff Creek Cowboy Church in Winters and Gordon “Bubba” Fowler of Colorado River Cowboy Church in Smithville to the Western Heritage Council.