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Missions network board adopts purpose statement

By Ken Camp

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DALLAS—The purpose of Texas Baptists' developing missions network is to “connect God's people to advance Christ's call to missions,” and its board of directors hopes to name a leader for the network by September.

At its May 14 meeting, the network's board of directors adopted a purpose statement in both English and Spanish for the emerging entity.

Mike Stroope, missions professor at Truett Seminary in Waco, noted the purpose statement is “Christo-centric rather than organizational, needs-centered, or man-centered.” He said the idea of “connecting” is “at the heart of the statement and key to everything we're going to do as a network.”

Charles Wade, executive director of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, characterized the purpose statement as “a powerful way of saying the Great Commission in a fresh new way, perhaps capturing the way Jesus' disciples first heard that commission.”

After extended discussion and after making some revisions to an earlier purpose statement proposed by the board's organizational committee, the board approved the statement in both English and Spanish. To express

their affirmation, board members as a group stood and recited the statement—first in Spanish and then in English.

The board also approved a description of the network, a personnel profile for its leader and a suggested timeline for filling that leadership post.

According to the board, the network “facilitates the relational connection of churches, organizations and individuals around the world who are passionate about obeying Christ's call to missions. Connecting God's people with opportunities and resources results in collaboration of various kinds and duration. This collaboration includes sharing information, training, education, strategies, support and consultation.”

The board agreed to receive nominations for a mission network leader through June 27, with the goal of filling that role on Sept. 9 “pending the emergence of a leader and the leadership of the Holy Spirit.”

If elected by the board of directors, the mission network's leader would be presented to the BGCT Executive Board Sept. 30 and to the state convention at its annual session in Lubbock Nov. 10-11.

Albert Reyes, chairman of the search committee and president of Hispanic Baptist Theological School in San Antonio, presented a profile of desired characteristics, abilities, skills, experience and education for the leader.

Eschewing the corporate structure of traditional mission-sending agencies, the board had determined at an earlier meeting that the staff leader would not be given the title “chief executive officer.” Instead, the board approved a motion declaring the Holy Spirit the “CEO of the network.”

No title has been determined for the staff leader's role.

According to the profile adopted by the board, the network's staff leader should be an authentic and growing disciple of Jesus Christ with a vision and passion for missions; be a servant leader and a strategic thinker; hold a biblical and holistic philosophy of missions; be innovative and a lifelong learner; have an entrepreneurial spirit; and possess integrity.

The prospective leader should be able to cast an articulate vision, initiate and lead change, coalesce and lead a team, mobilize and organize resources, and utilize research and technology. The individual should have well-developed relational and collaborative skills, as well as effective networking and communication skills.

The network's leader should be an active member of a Baptist church and have experience with and understanding of Texas Baptist culture and polity, along with understanding and commitment to historic Baptist beliefs. He or she needs experience in networking with individuals and organizations, leading a team and cross-cultural missions.

The individual should have completed advanced studies or training in missiology, and the board would prefer a graduate degree from an accredited institution.

Recommendations will be received by Reyes at Hispanic Baptist Theological School, 8019 South Pan American Freeway, San Antonio 78251. To protect confidentiality, all recommendations should be sent by mail or by special delivery. No phone or e-mail recommendations will be accepted.

In other business, the board set early August as the target date for considering an official name for the network. Directors voted to enlist a commercial firm to conduct research and present recommendations regarding a name.

Chairman Justice Anderson also appointed a six-member research and

development committee to identify critical issues regarding the network's organizational philosophy, assess emerging opportunities and discover resources.

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