

Bivocational ministers' group changes name_80904

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Bivocational ministers' group changes name

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BELTON—The Texas Baptist Bivocational Ministers and Spouses Association changed its name and became more closely aligned with the Baptist General Convention of Texas at its recent meeting, adopting a revised constitution.

The group, now called the Texas Baptist Bivocational and Smaller Membership Ministers and Spouses Association, specifically mentions in its constitution that its primary constituency is BGCT “supporters.”

The director of the BGCT bivocational and smaller church development office will be the association's adviser.

Bob Ray, one of the group's core leaders, currently holds that BGCT position. The BGCT funds the association's annual meetings.

“We are a part of and have always been a part of the BGCT,” said Randy Rather, a member of the constitution review committee.

But the document does not go so far as to exclude ministers of churches

that are affiliated with other conventions. “Persons who have a heartbeat for bivocational, smaller membership ministry in Texas” also are eligible for membership.

That clause allows the association to continue fellowship with ethnic ministers who are affiliated with bodies other than the BGCT, Rather said. The group largely is focused on encouraging and networking small church ministers across the state.

“We want to open our association to ministers across cultures,” said Rather, pastor of Tidwell Baptist Church in Greenville.

The organization's revision also narrows eligible voters to members who pay the annual membership fee, which is \$10. Previously, anyone who attended the annual business meeting could vote.

By paying the fee, voters are showing their commitment to the association and passion for small-church ministry, Rather said.

The new constitution also imposes term limits on elected officials. No one can serve more than three consecutive one-year terms in any one position. After three consecutive terms, he or she can serve in another capacity or choose not to be an officer.

After taking a year in another position or serving as an at-large member, that individual can serve again in the position he or she once held for three terms in a row.

This is a change for a group that primarily has had the same people in leadership roles for several years.

“That allows more people to be involved in leadership in our association,” Rather said.

Following the unanimous adoption of the constitution, the group elected a

new slate of officers. David Keith, pastor of Carlton Baptist Church in Carlton, was elected president. Rather was named first vice president, and Roberto Cepeda, a former bivocational minister who lives in Los Fresnos, was chosen as second vice president.

The group re-elected Rosalind Ray as secretary and Tom Echols, pastor of Eagle's Wing Baptist Church in Crowley, as treasurer.

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