

# BGCT leaders discuss bylaws changes

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**By John Hall**

*Texas Baptist Communications*

Baptist General Convention of Texas leaders recently wrapped up more than 30 sessions across the state, where Texas Baptists discussed proposed changes in the convention's constitution and bylaws.

BGCT Executive Director Charles Wade facilitated 17 discussion groups across Texas. Pastor Doug Evans of First Baptist Church in Laguna Park led 15 additional groups. More than 1,000 Texas Baptists—ministers and laypeople—participated in the discussions.

The question-and-answer sessions helped convention leaders formulate the best way to divide the state into sectors from which BGCT Executive Board members will be selected, Wade said.

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“We promised to be available to our Texas churches to help explain the provisions of the constitution and the proposed bylaws,” he said. “I’ve been encouraged by the questions raised and the consensus that has been gained.”

The proposed constitution and bylaws are meant to give the Executive

Board more direct involvement in the decision-making process, he noted.

The documents reduce the number of BGCT Executive Board members and eliminate several of the convention's boards, commissions and committees.

The discussion sessions are a result of a request from last year's BGCT annual meeting. Messengers asked convention leaders to provide forums to discuss the proposed changes that will take effect if affirmed during this year's annual meeting in Austin.

Pastor Jon Becker of First Baptist Church in Weslaco said the discussion sessions allowed individuals to express their feelings about the proposed governance changes. He added that he went away from the meeting he attended feeling the BGCT was attempting to strategically place resources throughout the state and cut down on bureaucracy.

“There is a sense that the restructuring is taking place to help churches,” he said.

In addition to the discussions, the BGCT sent each church a copy of the new bylaws and constitution, and the bylaws appeared as a special insert in the Baptist Standard. A copy of the proposed bylaws and constitution is on the BGCT annual meeting web site at [www.bgct.org/2005annualmeeting](http://www.bgct.org/2005annualmeeting).

BGCT leaders—including Wade and Associate Executive Director/ Chief Operating Officer Ron Gunter –have continued talking with individuals about the changes via telephone and e-mail.

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