

WMU may move annual meeting

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DALLAS—The Woman’s Missionary Union of Texas board of directors voted to explore holding the missions organization’s 2008 annual meeting at a time other than immediately prior to the Baptist General Convention of Texas annual meeting.

Texas WMU Executive Director-Treasurer Carolyn Porterfield said the board will consider whether moving the meeting could increase attendance and be a wiser use of the organization’s funds. The board will hear the findings of the exploration during its November meeting.

For the past several years, Texas WMU has held its annual meeting on the Sunday before the BGCT annual meeting. However, the meeting has been moved several times, having been scheduled in the spring, during the BGCT annual meeting and after the BGCT annual meeting.

In the current schedule, the Texas WMU annual meeting occurs at the same time as a Hispanic Baptist rally, a Texas Baptist Men rally and an African American Fellowship meeting, Porterfield noted. Women have to choose between the meetings rather than participating in all the events.

“I believe we have been hurt by moving our meeting to Sunday evenings,” Porterfield said.

Texas WMU Executive Director Emeritus Joy Fenner said the women's organization has "bent over backwards" to hold its annual meeting in conjunction with the BGCT annual meeting—perhaps to the detriment of the Texas WMU gathering.

Porterfield also noted the current two-hour Texas WMU annual meeting costs about \$9,000. She believes there may be a more effective way to use those funds—possibly a two-day meeting in the spring. A spring date was discussed, but the board will explore all options before making any final decisions, she said.

"I don't feel a two-hour meeting is sufficient to do the business we want to do," Porterfield said, suggesting a longer meeting could allow women to further focus on Texas WMU ministries.

A new annual meeting format also would provide an opportunity for Texas WMU volunteers to be together, since the statewide Texas Leadership Conference has been replaced with regional Awakening conferences, Porterfield said.

The decision to explore other dates for the annual meeting is not a move away from Texas WMU's support of the BGCT, Porterfield said. Texas WMU leaders remain staunch advocates of the convention and wish to have a presence at the BGCT annual meeting each year, she said.

"This is not about that," she said. "This is about WMU as an autonomous organization doing what we need to do."

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