

Gunter resigns as BGCT chief operating officer

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By Ken Camp

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Ron Gunter, chief operating officer for the Baptist General Convention of Texas and the person most responsible for implementing the Executive Board staff reorganization over the last two years, has resigned, effective Nov. 30.

Gunter—a former foreign missionary—joined the BGCT Executive Board staff in 2002 as regional associate in the Houston area. In 2005, the associate executive director's position was expanded to become chief operating officer, and Gunter was [tapped for the position](#).

Ron Gunter

During his time in that role, congregational strategists were deployed throughout the state to work alongside regional church starting consultants.

The [staff reorganization](#) Gunter spearheaded also included creation of a

service center to handle incoming and outgoing calls, a research and development office and a congregational leadership section.

But the reorganization has drawn criticism—along with Gunter’s role as part of the executive leadership team who recently [eliminated 29 positions](#) on the BGCT Executive Board staff.

“What we have achieved in these years (of Gunter’s tenure as chief operating officer) is really phenomenal, though it has been difficult,” BGCT Executive Director Charles Wade said.

He and Gunter “had a continuing dialogue about the challenges of the reorganization and leading the changes that were involved. Ron came to feel that this was the best time for him to make this decision,” Wade said.

In his Oct. 18 letter of resignation, Gunter alluded to the need for a new executive director to have the freedom to enlist his own associate. Wade has announced plans to retire Jan. 31, 2008.

“Significant, and at times difficult, adjustments have been made which have positioned the convention for further growth and greater service to the local church. As the transition is made to a new executive director, he will now have the opportunity to select his associate and assemble the team that will best serve the convention under his leadership,” Gunter said.

In recent days, some Texas Baptist pastors who are unhappy about decisions made by the Executive Board and its staff leaders discussed numerous motions they might introduce at the BGCT annual meeting in Amarillo, Oct. 29-30.

One reportedly called for the immediate resignation of the Executive Board staff’s executive leadership team—Wade, Gunter and Chief Financial Officer David Nabors. Gunter’s resignation announcement came 10 days before the start of the annual meeting.

In an interview, Gunter said he recognized he has been in “a controversial role,” and if the announcement of his resignation could “help calm things down” in BGCT life, he wants what is best for Texas Baptists.

Wade expressed appreciation to Gunter for his dedicated service in a difficult role. He brought to the post “a passion to shape our staff to be closer to, more responsive to, and more accountable for our work with local congregations,” Wade said.

The chief operating officer’s position is “one of the most difficult jobs in any organization,” he added.

Gunter “has been the one charged with bringing change,” he added. “I am grateful to him for his love for our work, his devotion to help implement the mission, vision, values and priorities adopted by our convention and his absolute reliance on God to sustain and guide him. I am confident God is going to continue to use Ron in remarkable ways.”

In his letter of resignation, Gunter expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to serve five years on the BGCT Executive Board staff.

“I cannot say enough wonderful things about the BGCT and about all the people I have encountered in my five years of service with the convention,” he wrote.

He also affirmed both Wade and Nabors for their leadership.

“I have especially enjoyed the opportunity work with you, Dr. Wade,” he wrote. “I consider you to be a true statesman, as well as a good friend and mentor. It has been an honor to serve on your executive leadership team. I have appreciated your personal and professional advice over the years. It is my hope that we will continue to have opportunities to serve together in the future.

“Also, I would like to say a ‘thank you’ to David Nabors and all the members of the operational team for their support and encouragement, and for their diligence and steadfastness as we have strived to move forward to fulfill the mission of the BGCT.”

After Gunter leaves his position as chief operating officer, the BGCT Executive Board operational team directors will report directly to Wade through the end of January. Dan McGee will become interim director of the congregational leadership section. Gunter had been serving as interim director of the area.

Gunter served in Eastern Europe from 1994 to 2002 with the Southern Baptist International Mission Board. He resigned when the mission board required missionaries to sign an affirmation of the 2000 Baptist Faith & Message doctrinal statement.

During his time with the mission board, Gunter served as a church planter, director of missions, strategy coordinator and mission administrator.

At the time of his resignation from the IMB, he was a regional strategy associate, managing Southern Baptist missions operations in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and Moldova.

Before he went to the foreign mission field, Gunter was pastor of First Baptist Church in Henrietta and River Oaks Baptist Church in Fort Worth, as well as churches in Kentucky and Tennessee. He also was a volunteer hospital and police chaplain.

He graduated from Austin Peay State University in Clarksville, Tenn., and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth.

Gunter and his wife, Cynthia, have three sons—Samuel, Lee and Andrew.

With additional reporting provided by Ferrell Foster and John Hall

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