

# NAMB chief addresses church planting and the BGCT

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The North American Mission Board will not fund church starts in partnership with the Baptist General Convention of Texas unless Texas Baptists change their statement of faith.

However, NAMB will be glad to help BGCT churches start churches anywhere in North America other than Texas.

NAMB President Kevin Ezell offered that answer in response to a question raised by Dustin Slaton, pastor of First Baptist Church in Round Rock.

Recently, BGCT Executive Director [Julio Guarneri told Texas Baptists' Executive Board](#) he had learned NAMB no longer would fund church starts of singly aligned BGCT churches in Texas.

## Desire to partner with NAMB and BGCT

Slaton noted his congregation—like the BGCT—officially names the 1963 Baptist Faith & Message as its statement of faith, although he affirmed the belief that the office of pastor is reserved for men.

He said his church wants to start churches in nearby Taylor to reach Koreans and other Asian groups moving to the area in the next 10 years.

“I want to lead my church to start complementarian Southern Baptist churches—gospel-preaching churches,” Slaton said. “And I want to do that with NAMB. And I want to do that with the Baptist General Convention of

Texas.”

Slaton asked Ezell to clear up this “[murky](#) situation.”

“NAMB has gladly accepted my church’s financial investment in the North American Mission Board for decades without asking which version of the BFM we have in our documents or concern about which state convention we’re a part of,” Slaton said.

“So, can we now count on the North American Mission Board to reciprocate that investment by partnering with us to plant genuinely Southern Baptist churches in Texas and invest in us with the same resources, training, guidance, relationships and financial opportunities you would provide to a church who partners with our other wonderful state convention?”

He asked how a “dyed-in-the-wool Southern Baptist” church that also is affiliated with the BGCT could work together with NAMB.

## Consider adopting the 2000 BF&M



North American Mission Board President Kevin Ezell responds to a question from Texas pastor Dustin Slaton. (Photo by Van Payne / The

## Baptist Paper)

Ezell said NAMB's "longstanding commitment" is to start churches in partnership with state conventions that affirm the 2000 Baptist Faith & Mission.

"We can partner with your church to plant a church anywhere in North America outside of Texas, because those states do affirm the Baptist Faith & Message 2000," he said.

It is a "difficult and awkward situation" for NAMB in Texas because the BGCT does not affirm the 2000 version of the Baptist Faith & Message, he said.

"My question has always been back the other way," Ezell said. "I cannot and will not change that standard. But I would love for you to consider and for your state convention to adopt the Baptist Faith & Message 2000."

In his "Texas Baptists Weekly" email on June 12, Baptist General Convention of Texas Executive Director Julio Guarneri wrote: "There are those who would like Texas Baptists to adopt a strictly complementarian position like the SBC and the BFM 2000. There are also those who would like Texas Baptists to be officially egalitarian. Yet, we are committed to unity in diversity under the Scriptures and the Lordship of Christ."

Guarneri recently noted an increasing number of churches beyond Texas have asked to affiliate as part of the GC2 initiative, focused on Christ's Great Commission and Great Commandment.

"We will continue to welcome churches from any state who align with our commitment to God's mission under the Lordship of Christ and the authority of Scripture who desire to affiliate with us. We can do more together than we can do apart," he wrote in the June 12 email.

“We will continue to partner with like-minded Great Commission entities who are willing to partner with us for the sake of the gospel.”