

# David Miranda tapped for new Millennial/Gen Z position

June 5, 2024

Executive Director Julio Guarneri announced a new position related to the Pastor's Common during his Executive Board meeting address May 20.

David Miranda, one of the network's founding members and current director of ministers development and missional network for Texas Baptists, will assume the new role.

"Building enduring relationships among current and emerging pastors and ministry leaders is crucial for this convention of churches moving forward," Miranda said by email.

"Doing so allows for vision alignment, leadership development and continued ministry collaboration for all involved, regardless of age or experience," he continued.

"Fostering these connections also helps Texas Baptists navigate leadership transitions and bring fresh ideas and perspectives to the table. These values help us to address contemporary challenges and opportunities in our shared ministry.

"I am grateful for this opportunity to continue serving emerging pastors and ministry leaders in the days to come."

Also by email, Craig Christina, associate executive director of Texas Baptists said, "We are thinking strategically about how to continue networking with, resourcing and encouraging these young ministers."

As a Millennial staff member, Miranda helped create a network of more than 350 young ministers who participate in preaching labs, retreats,

cohorts, podcasts and other community-building strategies, while his primary assignment was promoting young ministers' engagement with the convention's missional strategies, Christina noted.

By moving Miranda's position to the Center for Ministerial Health and "giving him the sole responsibility of continuing to build and resource this network, ... our goal is to empower David to serve full-time in resourcing young ministers and connecting them to the broader Texas Baptists family," Christina continued.

He said Miranda's work will be part of a broader strategy, "creating a pipeline of college students who will study at Texas Baptist universities and seminaries, participate in a forthcoming residency program, be mentored by established pastors and be connected to service opportunities in the local church and in Texas Baptists missions, ministries and convention work."

With this move, Christina said Texas Baptists hope to make it even easier to connect Gen Z and Millennial leaders they already are reaching and discipling with other Texas Baptists ministers, pastors, churches, ministries and institutions.

## **Where it's been**



David Foster, David Miranda and Jordan Villanueva, three founding members. (Pastor's Common Photo)

[The Pastor's Common](#) is a network of Millennial and Gen Z ministry leaders [established in 2019](#) by David Foster, groups and connections pastor at Shiloh Terrace Baptist Church in Dallas, Abraham Quiñones and Miranda who serve as co-pastors at the Promise Church in Farmers Branch, and Jordan Villanueva, Christian studies instructor at Howard Payne University.

The network serves as “a space for ministry leaders to be heard, be resourced, and to find community.”

Foster said they started Pastor's Common with the hope of creating a space for young people in ministry to listen, learn and collaborate with each other.

“It's just kind of grown to where now we can not only listen, learn and collaborate, but train, resource and coach pastors and churches, because that's kind of our heartbeat. Our mantra undergirding everything is ‘relationship is the ultimate currency,’” he said. “We've been able to do preaching labs and retreats with pastors all across the state of Texas.”

So, it's turned into “kind of a landing pad” for young people in ministry to

go to for training resources, to help one another in reaching Texas, he explained.

Foster added Executive Director Julio Guarneri “totally sees the momentum that we have and also the trust that we’ve built with, not just young leaders in ministry, but seasoned pastors.”

He noted Jeff Warren, pastor of Park Cities Baptist Church in Dallas, Dennis Wiles at First Baptist Church in Arlington and countless other more established ministers had been present with and advocated for them.

He believes Guarneri sees not just the benefit in allowing Pastor’s Common to have more funding, but “to let them have more of an influence on Southern Baptist life.”

“So, that’s where David Miranda was able to move into that position,” Foster said.

Foster served on the [Gen Z/Millennial task force](#), established after a motion at the Baptist General Convention of Texas annual meeting in 2021. The possibility of a full-time BGCT position for the Pastor’s Common was talked about in the task force’s work, Foster said, “but it was never written down.”

“The fruitfulness of the Pastor’s Common, and why it’s been so successful is because we haven’t had anything to hold us back ... and so, if it was going to be more formalized it would really have to depend on who was going to oversee it,” he said.

“We just felt, as the founders, that it needed to be David Miranda leading it, with heavy input from us. We never make a decision without the four of us, or at least three of us, agreeing to do it.”

Foster said the entire time since 2019, the four founders have been doing this—“part-time, not even part time.”

They all have full-time positions at their churches that take an incredible amount of focus. As high-capacity leaders, Foster said, they've been able to function in a manner that still allowed for growth. But he thinks they'll be able to do even more to reach leaders in Texas with a dedicated, full-time position.

He also noted they've been able to build a solid team outside of the four founders, with regional leads positioned geographically around the state. Having a full-time staff person to coordinate that broader Pastor's Common network should help, Foster continued.

Foster expects to see good things come out of having a full-time staff person.

When asked about how they plan to remain focused on young leaders as the founders grow older, Foster was confident they were poised to continue reaching the younger generations as they come into their ministries.

"Pastor's Common is always going to have a heart for young people, because they're just more creative and have more energy. ... So, part of the thing that we can hopefully accomplish with a full-time staff position is we can develop an even stronger onboarding ramp into the Pastor's Common—identifying, finding younger leaders, resourcing them, helping them get help, whatever it needs to be."

Foster said one beautiful thing about the Pastor's Common is its diversity.

"Our convention isn't as diverse as it should be, when you look at the demographics of the state of Texas. It's getting better. They're working that way. But I think what people don't understand is that with younger generations, we're just going to be diverse because it's so normal to us."

## Where it's going



Participants in a Pastor's Common annual meeting.  
(Texas Baptists Photo)

Even though he and the other founders are in their later 30s now, Foster said they are continuing to see a growing interest in the Pastor's Common among emerging Gen Z (20-something) leaders in ministry. Those younger leaders have heard of them and know to come there for the networking and resources they need, Foster said.

Scotty Swingler, a younger millennial, associate pastor of students at Sugar Land Baptist Church and member of the 2021 Millennial/Gen Z task force who's been plugged into the Pastor's Common since 2020, also weighed in, saying he is "thrilled that David Miranda is going to be able to do that full-time."

He mentioned Miranda has "basically been the tip of the spear and primary voice of leadership for the Pastor's Common since its inception, and he's mostly been doing that as not as his job, just out of his care for young pastors and ministers getting to connect.

"David Miranda loves well, and he is a great networker and a connector,

and he is the right guy for that role, and I'm very thrilled that they are giving him that opportunity."

Swingler said he's "thrilled the BGCT sees the value of what Pastor's Common has added to our churches and our convention, and hopefully this is the first step of many in expanding our network and resourcing young ministers across the state."

He, too, sees securing financial and positional support as a huge part of the value of partnering with Texas Baptists. The financial and institutional stability of Texas Baptists is what will ensure Pastor's Common can continue to grow and resource the next generation of pastors, Swingler said.

"Pastor's Common has been doing what the [BGCT has been talking](#) about for five years. We have been listening. We have been hosting opportunities for young leaders to share, organically, already.

"I don't think it's a partnership where BGCT gives us some funding so we can sustain ourselves. I think the Pastor's Common can be and should be a primary vehicle by which the BGCT achieves some of these other goals that they've set forward."

Swingler said he hopes they approach it as a combined effort in the same direction to achieve all the goals—whether it's women, GC2, Pastor's Common or another initiative—to holistically work to accomplish these initiatives together.