

Merger discussions regarding Baptist Standard and Baptist News Global suspended

September 21, 2015

PLANO—Baptist Standard Publishing’s board of directors voted to suspend merger discussions with [Baptist News Global](#) until at least next summer.

[One year ago](#), the boards of the two organizations agreed to a process to explore whether the Texas Baptist news organization and the independent national news service should merge operations.

At their mid-September board meeting, Baptist Standard Publishing directors unanimously approved a recommendation from their merger exploration team that they “temporarily suspend” merger talks with Baptist News Global.

They cited the complex process of Baptist News Global’s creation, which resulted from a merger of the *Standard’s* long-time news partners Associated Baptist Press and Virginia’s *Religious Herald*.

“We have a tremendous amount of respect for Baptist News Global and their future vision, and we hope to continue our spirit of cooperation and collaboration with them,” said Kurt Knapton of Arlington, who led the Baptist Standard Publishing merger exploration team. “However, our board felt it best to pause discussions at this time, given the amount of change happening there.”

The board-approved task force recommendation included a request for a meeting of representatives of the two organizations’ board in July 2016 “to consider resuming merger discussions.”

As part of the same recommendation, the board voted to ask staff leaders of the two organizations to “develop a plan for continued collaboration—helping each other with coverage, sharing content and cooperating on other tasks as advisable.”

“Changes and challenges in both Baptist life and in the publishing/media industry as a whole make it incumbent on the *Baptist Standard* to stay more focused than ever on the service we provide to Texas Baptists, which is core to our mission,” said Meredith Pinson-Creasey, chair of the Baptist Standard Publishing Board.

Kyle Reese, chair of the Baptist News Global board, noted as a native Texan and long-time reader of the *Baptist Standard*, he has a “deep respect” for the *Standard* and its work.

“I look forward to continued collaboration and cooperation with the *Standard*,” said Reese, pastor of Hendricks Avenue Baptist Church in Jacksonville, Fla. “However, there are a lot of moving parts right now, and to pause discussions about a merger seems an appropriate response.”

The *Baptist Standard* participated with other Baptist state papers in creating Associated Baptist Press, the national news service that developed into Baptist News Global, a quarter-century ago.

Beginning in 2006, the *Standard* and ABP—together with the Virginia *Religious Herald* and Missouri *Word & Way*—created New Voice Media. For about nine years, the New Voice Media partners worked on collaborative news packages and feature articles. In January 2014, ABP and the *Religious Herald* merged, initially functioning as ABPnews/Herald before becoming Baptist News Global.

David Wilkinson, executive director and publisher of Baptist News Global, characterized the *Baptist Standard* as a long-time “valued partner.”

“The *Baptist Standard* and Baptist News Global share a common heritage, core convictions and a commitment to journalistic excellence in a changing religious landscape,” Wilkinson said. “Many readers of the *Baptist Standard* are readers of Baptist News Global’s online content. These and other factors that led to extensive conversations about the benefits of a merger for our constituencies remain in place as our two organizations move forward.”

Baptist Standard Editor Marv Knox likewise pointed to the people involved in Baptist News Global as the *Standard*’s “closest news partners” for many years.

“We look forward to our continued collaboration, whatever form that takes,” he said.

“First and foremost, our goal is and will be to fulfill our legacy mandate—to ensure Texas Baptists receive accurate and reliable news, inspiring features and information that enables them to expand God’s kingdom.”

At the *Standard* board meeting, directors also elected as officers for the next year Chair Taylor Sandlin, pastor of Southland Baptist Church in San Angelo; Vice Chair Katy Pritchard of Dallas; and Secretary Linda Bell of Dallas.