

Search committee listens to Texas Baptists

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The next executive director of the Baptist General Convention of Texas needs to be an effective and accessible communicator who recognizes the diversity of Texas Baptists, participants in an online listening session told members of the executive director search committee.

Texas Baptists' next executive director also should cast a vision that will "draw churches together to accomplish big things" no single congregation could accomplish individually, a Hill Country pastor said in the Nov. 2 listening session.

The executive director needs to be able to "speak Gen Z and speak Millennial," have firsthand experience leading a small church, and also would benefit from church planting experience, various participants in the listening session said.

A couple of pastors emphasized the need for a leader who will take strong stands on moral issues that set Texas Baptists apart from secular culture, while another minister said the emerging generation of young adults want Baptists to "stop fighting about politics."

Several pastors referred to the president of the Southern Baptist Convention as "the leader of our national convention." Currently, the SBC is debating whether its prohibition on women pastors applies only to senior pastors or to anyone who carries the title "pastor."

But the associate pastor of a Houston-area church that affirms the calling of women in ministry stressed the need for a Texas Baptist leader who respects its position as "an autonomous church decision."

One participant with previous search committee experience advised the executive director search committee to “look at the little things,” such as whether candidates return phone calls promptly.

More than 40 individuals participated in the initial open forum via Zoom. Additional online listening sessions are scheduled at 10 a.m. on Nov. 8 and at 5 p.m. on Nov. 10. An in-person listening session will be held at 1:30 p.m. on Nov. 14 during the BGCT annual meeting in Waco.

Some participants joined the Zoom call expecting to hear details of a committee-developed position profile for the executive director.

Instead, David Mahfouz, pastor of First Baptist Church in Warren and chair of the search committee, explained the committee first wants to hear from Texas Baptists before creating a profile or job description.

Mahfouz explained the committee held its first online “get-acquainted” meeting in August before meeting in-person in mid-October.

“Now we are in a period of prayer and listening to Texas Baptists,” he said.

The committee will develop the position profile and job description in December. Mahfouz said the committee will post the job opening in early January and begin receiving resumes and recommendations at that time.