

Texas Baptists realigns for GC2 Strong strategy

February 4, 2026

Texas Baptists has realigned the Center for Cultural Engagement as part of its GC2 Strong strategy to better equip churches for Great Commandment and Great Commission faithfulness.

The changes, effective Feb. 1, redistributed the center's ministries across the organization to provide churches with more direct access to resources for church, minister, and missions support.

As part of the realignment, affinity ministries, chaplaincy relations, and the Christian Life Commission will now operate within separate teams to allow for greater focus and clearer alignment with Texas Baptists' GC2 Strong priorities.

Affinity ministries—which serve and support cultural churches across Texas Baptists—will now be housed within the Relational Development/GC2 team.

These ministries include African American Ministries, Texas Baptists en Español, Intercultural Ministries, and Western Heritage. Together, affinity ministries represent nearly 48 percent of Texas Baptists churches.

“This move is taking place because we want to make sure that our GC2 Strong strategy is contextualized for all of our affinity groups through the Relational Development Team,” said Julio Guarneri, executive director of Texas Baptists.

“We want our cultural groups to be involved at every level of ministry across Texas Baptists,” he stated.

Affinity Ministries

The Relational Development/GC2 team, led by Sergio Ramos, connects with conventions, churches, and institutions across the state.

Carlos Francis, current director of African American Ministries, will assume a new role as director of Affinity Relations/GC2 Support. He will continue to lead African American Ministries and will also serve on the Texas Baptists Leadership Team, providing direct input to staff leadership.

“Our affinity ministries represent nearly 48 percent of our churches and play a tremendous role in advancing the GC2 initiative. Their impact is essential to who we are and where we are going,” Ramos, senior director of Relational Development/GC2 Initiative, said.

Guarneri emphasized the realignment is not a move away from cultural engagement, but rather a way to give each ministry greater focus.

“We are intentionally giving the Christian Life Commission, chaplaincy relations, and affinity groups more focus,” Guarneri said.

“Affinity groups can serve cultural churches by focusing on relational development and GC2 faithfulness. Chaplaincy relations will continue to endorse and resource chaplains, and the CLC can focus on engaging issues of advocacy and justice with the objective of serving churches,” Guarneri continued.

Christian Life Commission

The Christian Life Commission will return to its historic role as a stand-alone ministry focused on ethics and justice, advocacy, and public policy.

The CLC remains under the leadership of Katie Frugé, who will continue to

serve on the Texas Baptists Leadership Team. Rebecca Treviño has transitioned from her role with the Center for Cultural Engagement to serve as policy analyst for the CLC.

Plans are underway for the CLC to produce new resources for churches in key areas.

“This realignment is an opportunity to support churches and ministers through clear access to key resources in the areas of affinity ministries, ethics and advocacy, and chaplaincy,” Guarneri said.

Frugé expressed confidence in the changes and the future of the CLC.

“I’m confident that each ministry is positioned well to continue the important work they have done so ably for Texas Baptists,” Frugé said.

Chaplaincy

Chaplaincy Relations has transitioned under the Office of the Associate Executive Director on an interim basis.

This ministry endorses chaplains serving in a variety of fields, including military, business, prisons, and hospitals.

Under the leadership of Todd Combee, chaplaincy will work with Craig Christina, associate executive director, to continue supporting chaplains in their ministry roles.

Future changes

Guarneri said there are no immediate plans to realign other ministry centers, including the Center for Church Health, Center for Ministerial Health, Center for Missional Engagement and Center for Collegiate

Ministry.

However, he noted Texas Baptists leadership is continuing to evaluate how all ministries align with GC2 Strong.

“As part of the GC2 Strong strategy, every convention ministry will prioritize equipping churches for Great Commandment and Great Commission faithfulness,” Guarneri said.

“While there are no plans to realign other ministry centers at this time, there may be progressive changes over the next few months as we take a closer look at how every ministry supports the GC2 Strong strategy. Ultimately, we want to ensure that ministries are appropriately aligned to strengthen churches, ministers, and missions into the future,” he said.

Guarneri also noted the realignment will enhance the work of leaders within Intercultural Ministries.

“Mark Heavener, Rolando Rodriguez, and James ‘Mac’ McLeod, under the leadership of Carlos Francis, will be able to be involved in the GC2 Strong strategy and contextualize it to serve their churches in a more effective way,” Guarneri said.

“It will be a positive thing for these cultural groups, and they are all on board. First and foremost, we are making this move to equip churches for Great Commandment, Great Commission faithfulness.”