

ISSUE**SBTC POSITION****BGCT POSITION**

Relationship to Southern Baptist Convention

The SBTC was founded to relate exclusively to the Southern Baptist Convention. Concern about the BGCT distancing itself from the SBC was a driving force in creating the new convention. SBTC's mission statement declares the convention exists "to facilitate, extend and enlarge the Great Commission ministries of the Southern Baptist Convention" and SBC churches in Texas. The SBTC has adopted the SBC's 2000 version of the Baptist Faith & Message as its own doctrinal statement. Highly critical of Cooperative Baptist Fellowship or anyone related to CBF. Does not allow churches to affiliate with CBF.

Although still a partner with the Southern Baptist Convention, the BGCT has not walked in lock-step with changes enacted in the SBC since 1979. BGCT leaders have publicly opposed some of the positions and actions taken by SBC leaders in recent years, including dramatic changes at the six SBC seminaries and in the SBC's doctrinal statement, called the Baptist Faith & Message. The BGCT has not adopted the SBC's 2000 version of that faith statement, instead reaffirming the 1963 Baptist Faith & Message, drafted by representatives of all state Baptist conventions within the SBC. Allows churches to relate also to Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

Relationship to churches

The SBTC is built around "theological agreement." Participating churches must affirm the convention's doctrinal statement, including belief in biblical inerrancy, opposition to women serving as pastors and opposition to homosexuality. Affiliated churches also must actively support the Southern Baptist Convention. The preamble to the SBTC constitution states: "To preserve and make secure the fundamental principles of our faith, to protect our doctrinal integrity and denominational unity, to ensure that the affiliated bodies of this body conduct their business in an orderly and democratic manner ..."

The BGCT is built around cooperation. Membership is open to any missionary Baptist church that desires to cooperate in fulfilling the convention's objectives of evangelism, missions, Christian education and benevolence work. The BGCT's constitution states the object of the convention is "to awaken and stimulate among those churches the greatest possible activity" in cooperative ministry. No affirmation of a specific doctrinal statement is required, although participating churches are to be of "like faith and work."

Relationship to agencies/institutions

From its inception, the SBTC has declared its intention to avoid creating a "bureaucracy." Through its Cooperative Program, the SBTC financially supports all the agencies and institutions of the Southern Baptist Convention. Any other entity desiring to affiliate with the SBTC or receive contributions through the SBTC must sign a statement of relationship that includes affirmation of the SBTC doctrinal position.

In addition to processing Cooperative Program contributions to national and worldwide Baptist ministries, the BGCT conducts much of its statewide ministry through affiliated agencies and institutions. No formal statement of faith must be signed, but in most cases the BGCT elects all or a majority of the institution's governing board. In a few cases, special arrangements have been negotiated between the BGCT and an institution concerning governance and related matters.

Support for Texas ministries

Apart from the SBTC's own programs for missions and evangelism, the convention supports one Texas-based institution, Criswell College in Dallas. SBTC leaders last year asked BGCT agencies and institutions to consider a formal "fraternal" relationship with the SBTC, but none of those entities chose to do so.

In addition to extensive Executive Board ministries such as Baptist Student Ministry, River Ministry and the Church Starting Center, the BGCT affiliates with and supports Baylor University, Dallas Baptist University, East Texas Baptist University, Hardin-Simmons University, Houston Baptist University, Howard Payne University, University of Mary Hardin-Baylor, Wayland Baptist University, San Marcos Baptist Academy, Hispanic Baptist Theological School, Valley Baptist Missions/Education Center, Baptist Child & Family Services, Buckner Baptist Benevolences, South Texas Children's Home, Texas Baptist Children's Home & Family Services, Baptist Memorials Ministries, Baptist Community Services, Golden Palms Retirement and Health Center, Hendrick Health Center, Baptist Health System, Baptist St. Anthony's Health System, Baylor Health Care System, Hillcrest Baptist Medical Center, Memorial Hermann Baptist Hospitals and Valley Baptist Health System.

Giving options

The SBTC offers one unified Cooperative Program funding option. Church contributions are divided 51 percent to the Southern Baptist Convention and 49 percent for SBTC programs in Texas. Cooperative Program gifts through the SBTC fund all SBC ministries without restriction. Designated funding is allowed only for SBC agencies and other entities that have signed formal agreements with SBTC. The only external entity funded by the SBTC at this point is Criswell College. No BGCT agencies or institutions receive funding through the SBTC.

The BGCT offers two basic giving plans, which create a variety of options. The BGCT Adopted Budget allocates 72.3 percent of income to fund all BGCT ministries and 27.7 percent to fund the two mission boards and most of the other ministries of the Southern Baptist Convention. The Adopted Budget provides up to \$1 million annually in funding for SBC seminaries, plus additional funding for three Texas Baptist seminaries. It does not fund the SBC's Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission. Churches not using the Adopted Budget are allowed to divide their gifts any way they choose, including allocations to BGCT ministries and institutions, SBC ministries, including seminaries, and other Baptist work. Churches may send worldwide missions contributions through the BGCT to the SBC, the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship or the Baptist World Alliance.

Theological education

The SBTC Cooperative Program funds the six SBC seminaries according to the proportion determined by the SBC. The convention also funds Criswell College in Dallas.

A Seminary Study Committee in 2000 determined the six SBC seminaries no longer teach in accordance with Texas Baptist beliefs and therefore recommended a redirection of some funding from those seminaries to three BGCT schools—Hispanic Baptist Theological School, Logsdon School of Theology at Hardin-Simmons University and Truett Seminary at Baylor University. The BGCT Adopted Budget provides up to \$1 million annually to the SBC seminaries, mainly Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth. The BGCT also provides millions of dollars in additional funding to the SBC seminaries annually through the designated gifts of BGCT churches. The BGCT has pledged to distribute church-directed funds in the manner any church desires.

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