

BGCT messengers affirm marriage as union between a man and a woman_111504

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For Texas Baptist Communications

SAN ANTONIO-The Baptist General Convention of Texas overwhelmingly affirmed marriage as a union between a man and a woman, but not without verbal protest from a couple of messengers.

"I don't feel this resolution is in accordance with a sense of inclusion and allowing everyone who is Baptist to be part of this wonderful group," said Charlene Hooker, a messenger from First Baptist Church in Fredricksburg.

All but one other comment supported the resolution, which received applause and a strong show of support from the crowd.

"Let us take firm our resolve and stand bold and tell the whole nation we serve a living Savior," said Marvin Delaney, pastor of South Park Baptist Church in Houston.

The resolution passed by an overwhelming majority. It stated the BGCT affirms "the biblical understanding of marriage, while honoring and

supporting those who are single.”

Another resolution promised Texas Baptists' commitment to pray for public school children and staff.

The resolution in support of public education noted, “Baptists were instrumental in supporting the development of public education in the United States” and pointed out public schools “provide education for 'the least of these' in our communities, including the poor, immigrants, refugees and special-needs students.”

It also pointed out thousands of Texas Baptists “serve ably and faithfully as public school teachers, administrators and staff out of a deep sense of Christian commitment to their communities.”

In addition to pledging prayer for the schools, the resolution promised Texas Baptists would “support the public schools in our communities in appropriate and tangible ways” and “support adequate funding for public education so that teachers, administrators and students can meet the critical challenges confronting them.”

A resolution on the role of churches and other volunteer organizations took a stand for Texas' poor and needy.

The resolution noted BGCT churches annually provide 180,000 volunteers to help people in need in their communities, and pointed out many churches provide such community ministries as food banks, emergency financial assistance, clothes closets, senior services, transportation and prisoner/ex-offender support.

However, it reported most churches are better-suited to provide short-term, small-scale relief and directed care, rather than ongoing, large-scale programs.

The resolution cited the Texas Health and Human Services Commission plans to close more than 200 regional offices and depend upon 1 million volunteer-hours to take up the slack. It called on state officials to recognize that partnerships with churches in the new initiative “must be based upon prudent judgments, research-based practice and adequate investment from both state and volunteer organizations.”

Another resolution noted the state legislature reduced the number of prison chaplains by more than 40 percent and called on state officials to “maintain all current correctional chaplain positions and support no more reductions of staff” in the next two years.

When asked if this resolution promised to send a BGCT representative to speak to legislators, the answer was yes.

“We need to repair some of the damage that has been done” by recent cuts, said Phil Strickland, executive director of the BGCT Christian Life Commission.

The convention also recognized the host city of San Antonio and local Baptists for assistance with the annual meeting and thanked convention officers and staff for their leadership and “untiring labor on behalf of Texas Baptists.”

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