

Editorial: Seminary's homosexuality stand consistent with BGCT precedent_20904

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Commentators expressed surprise that a student at Baylor University's George W. Truett Theological Seminary lost his scholarship because he is gay.

They shouldn't be shocked. The Baptist General Convention of Texas—which counts Baylor among its nine affiliated universities—has not changed its understanding of homosexual activity.

Matt Bass, a Truett student since 2001, lost his scholarship in December, several months after he told friends he is gay. Seminary students typically receive financial support from Baylor and the BGCT to offset the high cost of tuition. While Bass was not expelled, he left because he could not afford to continue his studies there.

The Bass episode represents but the latest in a string of stands the BGCT has taken to say homosexual activity is unacceptable:

In 1982, messengers to the BGCT annual session approved a resolution that

said, "The homosexual lifestyle is not normal or acceptable in God's sight and is indeed called sin."

- ◆ In 1996, the BGCT Messenger-Seating Study Committee presented a report, approved by the convention, that said: "The Bible teaches that the ideal for sexual behavior is the marital union between husband and wife and that all other sexual relations-whether premarital, extramarital or homosexual-are contrary to God's purposes and thus sinful. Homosexual practice is therefore in conflict with the Bible."

- ◆ In 1998, the BGCT Administrative Committee and Executive Board voted to decline to receive any financial contributions from University Baptist Church in Austin, which had ordained a homosexual man as a deacon.

- ◆ The Administrative Committee's recommendation to the Executive Board said: "Churches should seek to minister to all persons, including those who continue in sinful practices. The love and grace of God embraces all persons and instructs all Christians to share God's love with others. We commend those who seek to minister to those persons who engage in homosexual behavior. We cannot, however, approve of churches endorsing homosexual practice as biblically legitimate."

- ◆ The Baylor student handbook sexual misconduct policy addresses homosexual acts, incest, adultery and fornication.

- ◆ In reference to Truett Seminary's decision to revoke Bass' scholarship, Dean Paul Powell said: "Our standards of right and wrong are the Scriptures. If we ever abandon them, we're out of business. There's no reason for us to exist."