

Baptist Briefs: California convention expels ‘Third Way’ church

September 19, 2014

The [California Southern Baptist Convention’s](#) Executive Board voted to withdraw fellowship from a church whose pastor says he believes homosexual acts are not always sinful. In a unanimous vote of the 35 members present, the board voted to withdraw fellowship from [New Heart Community Church in La Mirada, Calif.](#), for holding beliefs contrary to the Baptist Faith & Message. Board chairman Montia Setzler, pastor of Magnolia Avenue Baptist Church in Riverside, Calif., said the board was acting as the “convention ad interim” in taking the action. New Heart first made headlines when Pastor Danny Cortez told the congregation in a February sermon he had changed his stance on homosexuality. The sermon, which Cortez posted on YouTube in March, has been viewed more than 46,000 times. Following Cortez’s controversial sermon, the congregation voted on four possible options—terminate Cortez as pastor and maintain the traditional view that homosexuality is sinful; take more time to consider the issue; become a church fully welcoming and affirming of gays; or establish New Heart as a “Third Way” church, neither affirming nor condemning homosexuality but “agreeing to disagree.” The congregation split when no option received a two-thirds majority. The faction that went with Cortez retained the name “New Heart Community Church” and the articles of incorporation.

Global Women director steps down. Cindy Dawson will step down Oct. 31 after eight years as executive director of [Global Women](#), a woman-to-woman missions organization based in Birmingham, Ala., with international partnerships addressing sex trafficking, clean water, maternal health,

education and economic development.  Cindy DawsonDawson, a former Cooperative Baptist Fellowship missionary to Russia who took the helm of Global Women in 2006, said Sept. 15 she has been praying for several years God would help her know when she had led the organization as far as she could. "Though this has been a difficult decision for me, I believe that time has come," Dawson said. "I am extremely proud of how far we have come in these eight years, and trust this is God's perfect timing for Global Women to reconfirm her vision and determine next steps as she seeks a new leader with additional skills and a fresh passion that can lead her forward." Currently Global Women works in global partnerships to address sex-trafficking prevention and restoration in Moldova and Central Asia, clean water and education in Zambia, maternal health in Haiti and economic development in Nepal, Myanmar, Central Asia and Uganda. Global Women was founded in December 2001 as a way for Christian women to network and mentor younger women through "shared learning and service." Organizers included former national leaders of Woman's Missionary Union, auxiliary to the Southern Baptist Convention, and Suzanah Raffield, the founding executive director, who resigned in 2005.