

BGCT considering change in relationship with Baylor

August 16, 2022

The Baptist General Convention of Texas is seeking to “review and consider changes” to the special agreement that defines its relationship with Baylor University.

The BGCT has related to Baylor by special agreement for more than three decades.

BGCT Executive Director David Hardage issued a brief statement Aug. 16: “The BGCT has entered into initial conversations with Baylor University to review and consider changes to the special agreement between our two institutions. Conversations are kind, gracious and cooperative, but will take some time to complete. We will share additional information as it comes available.”

In response, Baylor University released its own statement: “For more than 175 years, Baylor University and Texas Baptists have served side by side to extend the kingdom of God in Texas and beyond. We remain firmly rooted in our shared history, and the university is committed to continuing to maintain its historic relationship with the BGCT and with Texas Baptists. Such a commitment is at the heart of Baylor’s motto - *Pro Ecclesia, Pro Texana*, or ‘for the church’ and ‘for Texas.’”

The statement from Hardage did not indicate the reason for reviewing and considering changes to the relationship agreement with Baylor.

However, some Texas Baptists have made known their opposition to Baylor’s decision to [grant a charter to Prism](#), an LGBTQ student organization, on April 19.

On May 3, the BGCT posted a [statement on its website](#) from Hardage: “We are aware of the recent chartering of the Prism at Baylor student organization by Baylor University. We have heard concern expressed by many in the Texas Baptists family and are in the process of communicating those concerns to university leadership. There has been some confusion regarding the group’s chartering, and we are seeking clarification to determine the best course of action moving forward. The [BGCT’s position on Human Sexuality and Biblical Marriage](#) has not and will not change.”

Relationship based on special agreement

Baylor University was chartered by the Republic of Texas in 1845 at the request of the Texas Baptist Education Society.

From 1886 until 1990, the BGCT elected all of Baylor University’s governing board of trustees. On Sept. 21, 1990, Baylor amended its charter to allow the governing board of regents to elect its own successors. Herbert H. Reynolds, then president of Baylor, said the university took the action to protect it from the kind of “fundamentalist takeover” that already had occurred in the Southern Baptist Convention.

After extensive negotiations, Baylor subsequently agreed to revised its amended charter to allow the BGCT to elect directly up to 25 percent of the board of regents. The agreement stipulated all regents would be Baptist, and 75 percent would be Texas Baptists. Messengers to the 1991 BGCT annual meeting in Waco approved the negotiated relationship agreement by a vote of 5,745 to 3,992.

In 2011, Baylor opened membership on its board of regents to non-Baptist Christians. In response, the BGCT and the university renegotiated its relationship agreement. The agreement granted Baylor greater input into

the selection of BGCT-elected regents, with the stipulation that BGCT-elected regents must be members of BGCT-affiliated churches.

Messengers to the [2011 BGCT annual meeting](#) in Amarillo approved the renegotiated relationship agreement with only a smattering of opposition.