

BGCT Executive Board deems two churches out of bounds

June 8, 2023

During an executive session of the May 23 Baptist General Convention of Texas Executive Board meeting, the board voted to declare two congregations outside of harmonious cooperation with the churches of the convention due to their public affirmation of same-sex sexuality.

The board did not identify the two congregations on June 8 because they have until June 30 to respond to the board action.

In the session, the board's executive committee brought a recommendation to find the two congregations to be outside of harmonious cooperation.

Following a review of information and discussion, the board voted unanimously to pass the recommendation, satisfying the two-thirds majority set forth by messengers at Texas Baptists' annual meeting in 2016.

Following the board vote, the two congregations were notified via letter of the results and offered the opportunity to respond to further clarify their position and, if appropriate, be considered for re-instatement.

"While we appreciate the long-standing relationship and previous collaborations with these two congregations, our heart at BGCT is to remain tethered to the grace and truth extended to us found only in God's word and the Spirit of Christ," said Bobby Contreras, chair of the BGCT Executive Board and pastor of Alamo Heights Baptist Church in San Antonio.

"This foundation has and will continue to be where BGCT stands united."

Concerns about the two congregations and their perceived public

affirmation were brought to convention leaders in the weeks leading up to the board meeting.

A member of the convention staff contacted the congregations to determine whether their theological views on biblical sexuality had changed.

In both instances, the congregations were found to hold views inconsistent with the convention's long-held view on biblical sexuality.

Supporting information was provided to board members for review during the executive session in advance of the vote.

"The board is committed to leading in sharing Christ and showing love in all we say and do," Contreras said.

Messengers to Texas Baptists' annual meeting in 2016 voted that the affirmation of biblical sexuality was one criterion for harmonious cooperation with the churches of the convention.

In part, the motion reads, "any church which affirms any sexual relationship outside the bonds of a marriage between one man and one woman be considered out of harmonious cooperation with the Baptist General Convention of Texas."

In that same meeting, messengers also voted to task the Executive Board with the administrative duty of removing churches found to be outside of harmonious cooperation. In part, that motion reads, "the convention reserves to itself exclusively, through a two-thirds vote of its Executive Board, the authority to remove a congregation from harmonious cooperation."

Additional information will be provided during the Executive Board's report to the BGCT at the 2023 Texas Baptists Family Gathering, July 16-18 in McAllen.