

# **BGCT messengers to consider GC2 statement of faith**

May 24, 2022

DALLAS—Messengers to Texas Baptists’ annual meeting will consider a statement of faith that sets parameters not only for collaboration with the Baptist General Convention of Texas, but also potentially to vet the beliefs of candidates for boards, committees or scholarships.

At its May 23-24 meeting, the BGCT Executive Board recommended the GC2 statement of faith for consideration at the annual meeting in Waco, Nov. 13-15.

The statement of faith for the GC2 movement—an emphasis on the Great Commission to “share Christ” and the Great Commandment to “show love”—affirms many historic Christian doctrines. It also includes some hot-button social issues not mentioned in the 1963 Baptist Faith & Message, the statement of faith previously approved by BGCT messengers.

The GC2 statement affirms “the sanctity of human life from conception to natural death,” defines biblical marriage in terms of one man and one woman, and identifies gender exclusively as male and female.

“The purpose of this statement of faith is not to replace any other Baptist statement, but to offer a concise summary of key theological principles essential to collaboration with the BGCT,” the background document provided to the Executive Board stated.

Unlike an earlier version of the GC2 faith statement approved by the board in September 2021 but not submitted to messengers at the annual meeting for approval, the background section of the current document adds the statement of faith “may also be used to vet the beliefs of candidates for

BGCT elected/appointed committees, boards or scholarships.”

The statement of faith was developed in response to groups or entities nationally and globally who have expressed an interest in working with Texas Baptists, the background document stated.

“The Lord is continually presenting Texas Baptists with the opportunity to collaborate with like-minded, orthodox, evangelical Christians in the USA and around the world who are increasingly uncomfortable with the extremes of pharisaical fundamentalism or culturally accommodating liberalism,” the background rationale for the recommendation stated.

“The need exists for a big-tent approach to missions and ministry that affirms the historic truths of Scripture and Baptist distinctives. This organic movement has created an opportunity for Texas Baptists to lead the way in offering a new vision for collaboration: the GC2 Movement.”

The statement of faith affirms basic Christian doctrines such as the Triune God; Jesus Christ as the head of the church; Christ’s virgin birth, atoning death, resurrection, ascension and return; the Bible as “God’s word and truth without mixture of error;” and the “urgent need to reach the lost with the good news of Jesus.”

It also includes distinctive Baptist beliefs such as the Lord’s Supper and baptism as the ordinances of the church; salvation “by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone;” “the priesthood of every believer and all believers;” and “the autonomy of the local church in governance and ordination.” It does not include other Baptist distinctives such as religious liberty, the separation of church and state, and soul competency.

In addition to the statement about the sanctity of human life, it also includes affirmations “that gender is a gift from God at birth who creates every person, of every race, male or female, in the divine image and likeness,” and “that biblical marriage is one man and one woman in a

covenant relationship with the Lord and one another.”

It also includes an affirmation not part of the earlier document the board approved last year: “that all people, fearfully and wonderfully made by God, have inherent dignity and inestimable worth and are to be treated with Christlike love.”

## **Pay off loan**

Also at the May 23-24 meeting, the board voted to pay off a loan from Christ Is Our Salvation, a charitable trust created by Paul and Katy Piper. The original loan from CIOS created a fund to provide interest-free loans to small churches and new churches. The origination of small-church loans from the program ceased in 2013.

As of last December, loans payable to CIOS totaled \$996,456. The foundation agreed to convert a portion of the loan into a grant, leaving a loan balance of \$709,292—an amount equal to church loans receivable at contractual obligation. The estimated collectible valuation of church loans is \$142,237.

The board agreed to close the designated quasi-endowment fund, valued at about \$130,000, and to use the proceeds from that fund and less than \$600,000 from the BGCT general operating account to pay off the loan.

The Executive Board also approved a policy change regarding more frequent background checks for employees, independent contractors, board members and volunteers.

Anyone who has supervisory or nonpublic interaction with children, youth or individuals with special needs; handles cash, credit cards or checks on behalf of the BGCT; or who drives a vehicle to fulfill the requirements of their role will be required to “submit to a background check at least every

three years.”

## **In other business, the Executive Board:**

- Approved recommendations from the Committee on Nominations for Boards of Affiliated Ministries by electing Daniel Stahl from Vista Community Church of Bell County in Temple as a Hardin-Simmons University trustee, Lisa Hultz from First Baptist Church in Dallas as a Baylor Health Care System trustee and Lori Boykin from First Baptist Church in Amarillo as a Baptist Community Services trustee.
- Elected three directors to the BGCT Executive Board to fill vacancies: Suzette Mitchell from United Missionary Baptist Church in Dallas, John Roach from Green Acres Baptist Church in Tyler and Aaron Pardue from Northway Baptist Church in Angleton.
- Revised the policy manual regarding additional compensation for employees who perform work outside their regular tasks and responsibilities. The revised policy permits honorariums to be granted at the discretion of ministry directors, subject to supervisor approval.
- Authorized the BGCT to engage specialists to help the convention apply for Employee Retention Credit.