

# Editorial: Angle: Does the Baptist Standard have one?

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“How do you like that? Even little Judy there’s got an angle going.”

“She didn’t mean anything by it ...”

“You don’t have to apologize. Everybody’s got an angle.”

“That’s a pretty cynical point of view.”

Recognize the dialogue? Here’s a reminder: [White Christmas](#). Bob Wallace got a kick out of Judy Haynes’ attempt to get the great Wallace and Davis to help the Haynes Sisters’ act. Betty—the other half of the Haynes Sisters—took exception to Wallace’s accusation.

But it was true—of Judy—wasn’t it?

What about Wallace’s broader accusation, that we all have an angle? Is it true of us?

## What’s the *Baptist Standard’s* angle?

“Angle” can mean different things from the benign to the sinister. When people think of the media and journalism these days, many tend to think of the more sinister meaning of angle as “[a secret motive](#).” What is a particular media outlet’s secret motive? Another word people use is “agenda.”

I was asked recently if the *Baptist Standard* has an agenda with regard to women in ministry. Another way of saying this is, “Does the *Standard* have a secret motive around women in ministry?”

I would be lying if I told you the *Baptist Standard* has no angle. Of course,

we have an angle. Our angle is: We want people to read what we publish, and for us to publish anything, we need financial support. More pointedly, we want you and your family, friends and churches to read us and to support us financially.

But do we have a secret motive or an agenda around women in ministry?  
No.

## Challenging the narrative

Many will be unhappy with my answer. Some want the *Standard* to promote women in ministry openly and actively. In other words, some want the *Standard* to have an agenda of promoting women in ministry. These have been glad to see women featured in Baptists Preaching and championed in op-eds.

Others want us—to put it plainly—to shut up about it already. They don't want to see another news story, op-ed or sermon about or from a woman leading in ministry. These point to certain Baptists Preaching features and recent op-eds as suggesting—if not outright proving—that the *Standard* intends to promote women leading in ministry, especially pastoring.

I responded to the questioner stating that the *Baptist Standard* does not have an agenda with regard to women in ministry. Our stance is as long as women are leading and preaching in BGCT churches, they will be featured in the *Standard*.

And as long as there are Texas Baptists opposed to women leading and preaching in BGCT churches, they have a place to voice their position in the *Baptist Standard*. One reason their position is not as apparent in the *Standard* is that they have not submitted op-eds for publication since I became the editor.

# A benign definition of “angle”

Another meaning of “angle,” one more nefarious (meant facetiously) than “a secret motive,” is the [geometric definition](#): “the space within two lines ... diverging from a common point.” For the present discussion, the common point is the Bible.

The *Baptist Standard* occupies space very similar to many churches in the BGCT defined by two lines. One line divides those who affirm (or will tolerate) women in ministry from those who do not. The other line divides those who affirm (or will tolerate) same-sex marriage from those who do not. This means for those on the opposite side of each line, the *Standard’s* angle is too wide.

Our willingness—my willingness—to publish articles favorable to women pastors and sermons preached by women—some of whom are pastors—places us in that middle space. Likewise, our not publishing articles favorable to same-sex marriage places us in that middle space.

And while we’re addressing all of this, we ought to note there are people on the other side of each line who we care about very much and will continue to care about, despite our significant theological differences.

## Making “angle” personal

Which gets us to a third definition of “angle,” one that gets very personal. Each one of us has “a subjective point of view, bias or personal feeling” about the things we talk about, read, watch, listen to or write about. In the world of journalism, this is called “[slant](#).”

As hard as we try to present fair news and opinion, as much as we want to keep ourselves out of what we publish, we are never completely successful.

So, what's my slant? I fit very comfortably in the space between the two lines. I have friends and family on the other side of both lines. And I don't want the lines to cut us off from one another. If I'm to be successful, then I have to be more concerned with reconciliation than with being right.

The core values of the Baptist Standard are expressed in three commitments:

- Journalistic excellence. Ken Camp is a master. I'm learning.
- Historic Baptist principles. These factor heavily into everything we [publish](#).
- The redemptive and reconciling work of Jesus Christ.

If—in all the ways “angle” can be understood—we are not faithful to any number of these three commitments, our angle is skewed, and we need to hear from you.

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