

# Editorial: Why did Baptist Standard publish that?

May 21, 2025

Last week, we republished an article that elicited quick responses from *Baptist Standard* readers wanting to know why we republished it.

From the beginning of my tenure as executive director, publisher and editor of the *Baptist Standard*, I have told our readers we are accountable directly to them—to you. If a reader has a concern, question, comment or complaint, communicate it directly to me. I am the responsible party.

Likewise, if we fail to maintain our core commitments to the redeeming and reconciling work of Jesus Christ, historic Baptist principles, and responsible journalism, communicate our failure directly to me. I am the responsible party.

I am grateful whenever readers do just that.

The most recent questions raised—the second questioner doing so on Facebook—merit my response here.

## The article and the questions

At 1:58 p.m. on Wed., May 14, we republished a news article from Religion News Service titled “[Forced out at Myers Park, Boswell starts new church.](#)”

At 2:07 p.m. the same day, I received an email from a Texas Baptist pastor asking if the Baptist General Convention of Texas is affiliated with either of the churches referenced in the article and for an explanation of why a story about “LGBTQ affirming churches” is in the *Baptist Standard*, when the BGCT does not affiliate with such churches.

I'm not sharing the pastor's name or location because it was a private communication with me.

I thanked the pastor for his question and stated, "I'm certain the BGCT is not affiliated with the churches connected to Boswell."

"In answer to what I think is your broader question," I continued, "The Baptist Standard, as an independent partner of the BGCT, is not limited to publishing news only about BGCT-affiliated churches and institutions. Our intent here was not to affirm a church but to report on what is happening among some Baptists, similar to the article "[Former Southern Baptist Josh Buice quits G3 Conference](#)" we published on [May 12]."

Over the weekend, a second Texas Baptist pastor commented on our Facebook post containing the same RNS story on Boswell. Since his comment is public, I will provide his name and his full comment.

"Why is the Baptist Standard sharing this with no critique or comment?" Dustin Slaton, pastor of First Baptist Church in Round Rock, asked in [his Facebook comment](#).

"The article originated from RNS, and is clearly in support of this pro-LGBTQ+ church. With no additional comment from The Standard, it seems like they are sharing this in support of the article's content and conclusions. I certainly hope not. Maybe some clarity could be added before the article?" Slaton commented.

## Why we republished

We republished the article in question as a report on what is happening among Baptists, not to affirm the two churches, the pastor or their position on LGBTQ+.

We did not offer critique or comment anywhere on the republished article,

because our view of responsible journalism is that news and opinion need to be published in separate articles. This is a point about which publishers and readers need to talk with each other.

Do we have the same definition of “responsible journalism?” I’m not sure we do, and I don’t mean that as a criticism of readers. I think it’s a result of the most prominent media outlets of our time blending news and opinion. Do readers want us to follow the example of those media outlets, or do they want us to keep news and opinion separated? This is an honest question.

What labeling makes the difference between news and opinion most clear to the reader? You’d think I would know the answer to that question, but based on periodic reader comments, it’s clear I don’t.

## **Where we stand**

In direct response to Slaton’s concern that the *Baptist Standard* may be “in support of the article’s contents and conclusions,” I have a two-part response.

First, what specific contents and conclusions are being referenced? Here again, this gets to the question about responsible journalism and whether a news story should reach conclusions. As Baptist Standard Publishing understands it, news is supposed to lay out the facts and report on people’s perceptions of those facts. Conclusions are the purview of opinion articles.

Second, I take it Slaton is referring to Ben Boswell’s, Myers Park Baptist Church’s and Collective Liberation Church’s affirmation of LGBTQ+ inclusion and wondering if Baptist Standard Publishing also wishes to promote LGBTQ+ inclusion.

I and Baptist Standard Publishing hold that the Bible allows for and blesses sex only within marriage and that marriage is to be between one man and

one woman. My thorough study of this issue in 2014 and 2015 did not change my view.

I and Baptist Standard Publishing also hold that people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or otherwise are created in the image of God; are human beings worthy of love, dignity, respect and honor; and are equal to everyone else in our need for grace, forgiveness, salvation, repentance and sanctification. How all of this works out in detail is beyond the scope of this article.

## **My opinion**

As for my comment on or critique of the story: The story is evidence that being LGBTQ+-inclusive is no safeguard against congregational division and decline. In fact, many Texas Baptists contend such inclusion is a primary source of congregational division and decline. During 2015 and the few years following, this certainly was the case in many churches I observed.

Whatever theological and social positions a church and its leadership hold, unity and growth are not givens outside the presence, indwelling, filling, guidance of and submission to the Holy Spirit. Let us be people who submit to the will of God the Father, to the lordship of Jesus Christ and to the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

## **My thanks**

I appreciate Dustin Slaton. I appreciate his seriousness about Jesus, the Bible, the church, evangelism, missions and the BGCT. And I appreciate him holding me and the *Baptist Standard* accountable.

Thank you, also, to the pastor who contacted me by email. I take you to be

equally serious about Jesus, the Bible, the church, evangelism, missions and the BGCT.

We are not perfect, we're not going to be perfect, and we're not going to pretend to be perfect.

We are accountable, and we will continue to be accountable to you, our readers, and to our commitment to the redeeming and reconciling work of Jesus Christ, historic Baptist principles, and responsible journalism.

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