

# **Voices: My view of the mics—gender and generational divides**

November 16, 2016

I wonder if anyone paid much attention to the discussion Nov. 15, during the second business session of the Baptist General Convention of Texas annual meeting in Waco. Messengers tried to follow the motions and countermotions and definitions of tabling motions. As we grumbled to ourselves and our neighbors, grousing about the growing complexity of two motions put before us, I dare say we were distracted from what was happening.

From my perspective, I saw something that ought to bring the Baptist General Convention of Texas fully awake.

I saw an older generation supporting a motion declaring “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.” I also saw a younger generation communicating—and desiring to communicate—opposition to the same motion on the grounds of the Baptist distinctive of local autonomy.

## **Do you see what I see?**

From my seat, I saw no one under about 50 years of age speak for the motion to remove churches whose positions affirm and provide full privileges for LGBT members. I also saw all those under about 40 years of age who spoke were against that motion, though not for reasons you might expect.

As a further observation, did anyone notice the gender gap between the for and against positions? If my memory serves me correctly, I saw no woman speak in favor of the motion to disfellowship. How do the men in the group feel about this?

Does anyone see what's happening?

### **Gaps on display**

I realize my perspective is my own and not without flaws. For instance, determining a person's age simply by appearance is risky business. I realize, too, I cannot speak for those who did not speak. Therefore, I am only relaying what I saw without attempting a definitive report of facts.

We've talked about the generation gap for years when discussing social issues. With respect to the matter of LGBT and same-sex marriage, we have analyzed *ad nauseum* the difference between the ages of those who oppose same-sex marriage and those who do not. With respect to ecclesiology, when we had a chance to discuss a possible gap in our understanding of local autonomy, we were not permitted a substantive discussion. Even so, a gap was on display for Texas Baptists at the 2016 annual meeting. Did anyone notice?

As the BGCT looks to the future and seeks to maintain its distinctiveness and its longstanding tradition of mission and ministry, is the demise of the BGCT—as it has been known—within view?

Do the gaps in the midst of the BGCT sound the bells?

When Texas Baptists hear the bells this Christmas day, what will they hear?

*I heard the bells on Christmas day  
Their old familiar carols play  
And mild and sweet their songs repeat*

*Of peace on earth good will to ...*

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