

Note from TBC: On May 25, 2010, the BGCT Executive Board voted to refuse to receive any further financial contributions from Royal Lane Baptist Church in Dallas and to ask the church to stop identifying itself as affiliated with the BGCT following Royal Lane's declaration that it had ordained practicing homosexuals as deacons. The following article was published in the early 2000s. However, the May 25, 2010, action by the BGCT Executive Board is fully in agreement with the BGCT position stated in this article.

BGCT OPPOSITION TO HOMOSEXUALITY

The Baptist General Convention of Texas, in annual session more than a decade ago (1982), expressed by convention vote its conviction that *"the homosexual lifestyle is not normal or acceptable in God's sight and is indeed called sin."* This position has never been changed, and it has been reaffirmed in various statements and actions across the years.

As recently as 1996, the Messenger Seating Study Committee of the BGCT, in its convention-adopted report, said, *"The Bible teaches that the ideal for sexual behavior is the marital union between husband and wife and that all other sexual relations – whether premarital, extramarital, or homosexual – are contrary to God's purposes and thus sinful. Homosexual practice is, therefore, in conflict with the Bible."*

In January 1998, the BGCT Administrative Committee learned that a church which had ordained a homosexual as deacon indicated on its Internet web page an affiliation with the BGCT. The BGCT Executive Board – at its February 24, 1998, meeting – approved an Administrative Committee recommendation that the BGCT decline any financial contributions from the church. The board also asked the church to remove the convention's name from its web site and other materials.

The expressed conviction of Texas Baptists present and voting at annual sessions of the BGCT is that *"the homosexual lifestyle is not acceptable behavior for Christians."*

The biblical basis for Texas Baptists' opposition to the sin of homosexuality is found throughout both the Old and New Testaments. Romans 1:26-27 provides a clear expression of the fallen nature of humanity: *"For this reason God gave them up to degrading passions. Their women exchanged natural intercourse for unnatural, and in the same way also the men, giving up natural intercourse with women, were consumed with passion for one another. Men committed shameless acts with men and received in their own persons the due penalty for their error."* (NRSV)

Leviticus 18:22 exhorts: *"You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination."* (NRSV)

The first two chapters of Genesis talk about the concept of marriage as a covenant relation between male and female. Marriage between male and female was a part of the good creation of God, providing for both partnership and procreation, thus the sacredness of the family.

Other scriptures add to the biblical basis for Baptists' opposition to the homosexual lifestyle, including Romans 1:26-32; Genesis 19:4-11; 1 Corinthians 6:9;

1 Timothy 1:10; and Jude 7.

The good news of the Bible affirms the value and worth of every person, offering hope for all in Christ, including homosexuals. Forgiveness, restoration, and transformation are available to the person who truly repents. God's love is all-inclusive. He asks His people to love all people, including those who are homosexuals, without endorsing their sinful acts.

The Baptist General Convention of Texas, through resolutions, statements, and reports that are biblically-based, clearly continues to oppose homosexuality while encouraging and affirming ministry to all persons in Jesus' name. For example, a 1998 recommendation from the Administrative Committee to the Executive Board contained the statement: *"Churches should seek to minister to all persons, including those who continue in sinful practices. The love and grace of God embraces all persons and instructs all Christians to share God's love with others. We commend those churches who seek to minister to those persons who engage in homosexual behavior. We cannot, however, approve of churches endorsing homosexual practices as biblically legitimate."*