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Steve Zimmerman

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'Submit' puts pastors in bind

By Andy Morrissey
STAFF WRITER

Ministers at three area Baptist churches are leery of a resolution calling on women to "submit graciously" to their husbands.

They all agreed the resolution may be well intentioned, but they also agreed the message may not be perceived that way.

Triad

"I was telling one of the ladies down at the desk, I try to hide under a rock in June and then come back out in July (after the Southern Baptist Convention). Inevitably instead of trying to do something positive, be proactive, it ends up being somehow we shoot ourselves in the foot," said Steve Zimmerman, minister of adult and child education at First Baptist Church on N. Main Street.

Controversial resolutions have been passed at the conference in recent years, including a boycott of Disney because the company extends benefits to the same-sex partners of employees, hosts "Gay Days" at its theme parks and produces movies that include sex and violence.

This week, the convention passed a resolution that said: "A wife is to submit graciously to the servant leadership of her husband, even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ."

Zimmerman, like the other ministers, said he fears the resolution comes across as saying husbands should be dominant of their wives, which is not a good strategy in a marriage, he added.

"I think it's seen more as a negative statement instead of a supportive statement for the family," Zimmerman said, who is married.

As for what his wife thought of the resolution, Zimmerman was careful in his choice of words.

"I'd have to ask my wife first. I think if the truth were known and we pulled away the veneer, many men would say the same."

Jim Baucom, pastor at Emerywood

Baptist Church and vice moderator of the Central Baptist Association, said he's worried some will use the resolution as a tool to seek dominance in their relationship.

"My fear is it will be abused. It will be abused by some who will say this is the only way it's supposed to be. It's not even the total interpretation of the Scripture," he said.

The Biblical passage the resolution was based on - Ephesians 5:22-33 - also says husbands should love their wives as much as themselves. And Baucom said other passages describe marriage as a union of equality.

Baucom, a veteran of marriage and parenthood, said he views marriage as a relationship of mutual submission. Each partner must give and take while following the guidelines of Christianity.

"Each of us (he and his wife) in our home has some areas where we're in es-

sence the ones who are the authority," he said.

Both he and Zimmerman emphasized that the Southern Baptist Convention doesn't speak for all Baptists. Each church, although of the Baptist faith, remains autonomous, Baucom said.

"The press has done more to get it (the resolution) out there, but what I'll say in our newsletter is, 'Remember what the Convention says is not what sets our official policies here,'" he said.

However, the pastor at First Baptist Church of Archdale, Brady Huneycutt, said the word "submit" may be part of the problem. The word is used in the Bible, but it has a different meaning in secular language.

He believes the message behind the resolution is important in a society where so many marriages - and families - fail.

"What we're seeing, looking at marriage, is what is God's mandate for it, and are we as Christians trying to live it in our homes?" Huneycutt said. "It's a duality of responsibility there."

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Clinton get
focus at
convention

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