

Southern Baptists wrestle with gay hoax

by [Adelle M. Banks](#)

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(RNS) Officials of the Southern Baptist Convention say they were the victims of a hoax in which a group claiming to be the denomination's Executive Committee announced it had started to support gay marriage.

A website of the "Southern Baptist Convention of America" features a "'welcoming and affirming' resolution on homosexuals" that it claims was drafted by the committee in an "extraordinary emergency session."

The supposed resolution concludes that "the sanctity of marriage for all unions joined in love under God's grace is holy and should receive marriage rights by the Southern Baptist ministry regardless of sexual orientation."

Roger Oldham, a spokesman for the official SBC Executive Committee, said Tuesday (June 28) the statement is a hoax.

"This is clearly not an action of the Southern Baptist Convention or the Executive Committee," he said. "It is a hoax and we do not know who is perpetrating the hoax."

The sham extended to a phone number listed on a press release that was answered by an "intern" of the "Executive Committee Press Office."

An email sent in response to a phone inquiry announced a press conference at the real Executive Committee's address in Nashville, Tenn.// Oldham said the committee did not host such an event.

Gay rights activists met in an unprecedented meeting with SBC President Bryant Wright during the Southern Baptists' recent annual convention in Phoenix. They reportedly had a civil discussion but Wright

maintained the Baptists' stance that homosexuality is a sin.

Brent Childers, executive director of Faith in America, one of the groups that met with Wright, said his organization had nothing to do with the hoax.

Childers called the hoax "not very productive" and said he was trying to determine who was responsible for it.