

WEST VIRGINIA STATEMENT OF CONCERN ON HOMOSEXUALITY

There is increasing pressure by homosexuals to gain popular acceptance by Christian churches of their lifestyle; to establish homosexual churches; to have such churches officially received by various denominations; to obtain recognition of homosexual caucuses in religious organizations; and to ordain avowed homosexuals to the Christian ministry. As American Baptists, we feel compelled to state our position concerning this issue.

In Scripture, our Creator God offers to us His plan for the fulfillment of our sexual natures through the union of one man and one woman within the institution of New Testament marriage. There is no scriptural endorsement of homosexual life styles as Christian life styles. God's intended order for humankind's expression of sexuality is heterosexual, monogamous, and life-long. Jesus endorsed this order.

We recognize that homosexuals are persons to whom the redeeming love of Christ is available, as it is to all who turn to Him in repentance. It is the responsibility and privilege of the church to minister to homosexuals as we minister to other persons, making known to them the grace and goodness of God.

Therefore, we call upon our denominational leaders, our churches and each American Baptist to:

Teach, by precept and example, the true nature and sanctity of the marriage bond as revealed in the Scriptures;

Reject attempts by those who seek to rationalize and promote sexual conduct, homosexual or heterosexual, which is outside the will of God for His children;

Affirm the teachings of the Bible as the only sure rule of faith and practice for life's pilgrimage; and,

Minister, in love and concern, to those caught up in sexual activities which grieve the heart of God.

Policy Base:

Policy Statement on Family Life: "We affirm that God intends marriage to be a monogamous, life-long, one flesh union of a woman and a man, who in response to God's call leave father and mother and cleave to one another."

Our faith in the New Testament: "...We reaffirm our faith in the New Testament as a divinely inspired record and therefore a trustworthy, authoritative and all sufficient rule of our faith and practice." (Adopted at the Annual Convention at Grand Rapids, Michigan, May 23, 1946)