

American Baptist Churches of Ohio Resolution on Human Sexuality

Because we are all wounded and broken people in need of the healing power of God's grace in Christ Jesus, and being aware of the confusion of voices pertaining to human sexuality, the following statement defines our common understanding for sexual behavior.

We affirm the Bible as our rule for faith and practice and embrace its ethic of compassion, love, and ministry to all persons and the availability of God's grace through repentance. (Luke 5:30-32, John 8:1-11, 1 Corinthians 6:11);

We affirm that God's gracious intention in creation for human sexual conduct as defined in scripture is faithful, lifelong heterosexual union for married persons and committed celibate behavior for unmarried persons. Other sexual practices clearly defined as sinful in Scripture are destructive of individuals, of community, and of the fellowship of believers, and like all sin, call for repentance, openness to the transforming power of God, and restoration to the community of faith. (Genesis 1:27, 2:24, 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8, Hebrews 13:4); (Leviticus 18:22, 20:13, Romans 1:18-32, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10)

We abhor and reject violence of all kinds against persons of all sexual orientations.

Therefore, we resolve that this Region will encourage grace-motivated ministries which respond to human need and offer God's transforming love to all wounded and broken people, including heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, and transgendered persons.

Acknowledging the high calling of church and Region leadership, we resolve that this Region will not recognize for ordination or recognize the preexisting license or ordination of any person practicing, affirming, endorsing, and/or celebrating adultery, fornication, gay/lesbian/bisexual behavior.

And finally, because of our commitment to do mission together under the authority of the Word of God; we resolve that the professional staff of the American Baptist Churches of Ohio will counsel appropriate action consistent with this resolution to the association* of any church within this Region that endorses, celebrates, or affirms adultery, fornication, gay/lesbian/bisexual behavior.

* Pursuant Bylaws of ABC Ohio, Rule 3: Constituency, Rule 3.2.2

"A church shall be dismissed from the Region, and thus from the denomination, by recommendation of the association of which it is a member. Each association shall implement its own criteria for dismissal of member churches with counsel from the Region's professional staff and with reference to ABC/USA's "Common Criteria for a Cooperating Church"