

RESOLUTION OF THE AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES OF MAINE
DEFINING OUR UNDERSTANDING OF GOD’S INTENTION FOR
THE EXPRESSION OF HUMAN SEXUALITY

We live in a time, not unlike times in the past, when there is much confusion over human sexuality, its nature and its appropriate expression. American Baptists have proclaimed themselves to be a people centered in Jesus Christ and committed to the belief that “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness...” (II Timothy 3:16 NIV). In the confusion of this day and age it is important that we give our world and our culture the instruction of Scripture in the area of sexuality; teaching it to ourselves and our children rebuking the world’s false teaching, and correcting Christians who are confused by the many voices and opinions calling to them. Therefore we affirm as the clear teaching of Scripture:

1. That God, in His creative work, purposely and intentionally made us male and female.
2. That as part of that intention, described first in the creation accounts and reaffirmed by our Lord’s own words, God intended that human beings would come together as male and female exclusively in the bond we label marriage, a relationship of love, commitment and sexual intimacy between one male and one female.
3. That the relationship of husband and wife in marriage is a holy reflection of the relationship of God with his people.
4. That we have fallen far from God’s ideal intention for us in this area as well as in all others.
5. That God makes clear in both the Old and New Testaments the serious nature of those sins which violate God’s intention that the fullest expressions of sexual intimacy should be limited to the “marriage bed”.
6. That Jesus in dealing with our sinfulness in this, as well as in other area offers Grace and Forgiveness to those who repent and turn from behaviors which are outside God’s intention for us.

Therefore:

1. We specifically affirm that the expression of sexual intimacy outside of the female/male marriage bond is forbidden by God.
2. We affirm that we, as the Bride of Christ, have the responsibility to proclaim this truth to our world and to offer Christ’s grace and healing to all persons who struggle with sin in this area of life.
3. We confess that we have in the past acted without the love and compassion of Christ toward certain classes of sinners in the area of sexual sin.
4. We covenant to become churches that, as Jesus welcomed publicans and sinners, welcome into our worship all those who are seeking to know Christ. We further covenant to offer our love to all and our support and help in healing and renewal to all those who join us as repentant sinners seeking Christ’s forgiveness and renewal of life.

Vote taken at 1995 Annual Meeting, October 18, 1995: yes – 139; no – 48; abstain - 15