

### **Resolution: Public Witness and Same-Sex Unions (2003)**

WHEREAS public witness and evangelism take place in the context of culture, and

WHEREAS Canadian society, despite a rich Judeo-Christian heritage, is now a secular society characterized by religious and cultural diversity, and

WHEREAS Canada is a free and democratic society, and

WHEREAS the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (Section 15) guarantees all Canadian citizens both individual rights and freedoms (civil liberties) as well as freedom of conscience and religion, and

WHEREAS we voluntarily acknowledge the Holy Scriptures as the basis upon which we order our lives in all matters of faith and practice, and

WHEREAS our interpretation of Scripture prohibits homosexual practice, and

WHEREAS we believe that marriage, as historically and currently defined in Canadian society as the lawful union of one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others, is consistent with God's plan for sexual bonding and the only appropriate context for sexual intimacy, and

WHEREAS we believe that this definition, while distinguishing between types of social relationships, does not discriminate against those of homosexual orientation, and

WHEREAS our interpretation of Scripture also challenges us to respect civil authority while living out our faith in the presence of the broader society, and

WHEREAS we have agreed as an Assembly (in 1996) to re-establish the priority of evangelism,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that we the delegates of the 157th Assembly of the Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches, hereby declare our intention to:

1. Reaffirm our understanding of Scripture concerning the practice of homosexuality (as contained in Resolutions passed at Assemblies in 1987 and 1996);
2. Reaffirm our commitment to the Statement Affirming a Christian View of Marriage (adopted at Assembly in 1999);
3. Continue to respectfully urge both provincial and federal governments to maintain the opposite-sex definition of marriage (as described in the Resolution on The Distinction Between Marriage and Same-sex Relationships, adopted in 2002);

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we will strive, at all times and in all places, to speak the truth as we understand it, in love and with humility;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that constituent churches are advised to develop and implement policies which celebrate and affirm marriage as a covenant union between a man and a woman in the presence of God, and the Christian wedding service as a fundamentally religious ceremony;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that constituent churches be encouraged to develop positive and proactive ministries aimed at teaching biblical principles for marriage so that the marriages of those who attend will be strengthened.