

Resolution Re. Same Sex Marriage (2005)

Whereas, we believe 1) that “the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments have their authority from God alone, and are given to us by divine inspiration” and 2) that “they are the only perfect supreme, infallible, and sufficient standard of faith and practice” (2 Timothy 3:16, 17; 2 Peter 1:20, 21; Psalm 199:105; quotations are from the first article of The Basis of Union, adopted in 1905-06) ; and

Whereas, we believe 1) that the gospel of Jesus Christ and the coming of the kingdom of God lead to the flourishing of all human life, 2) that the flourishing of human life does not come from fulfilling human desires, but by conforming to the way of life revealed by God in the Bible and exemplified in the life and teaching of Jesus, and 3) that we have an obligation as followers of Jesus Christ to bear witness to the fullness and abundance of life as God intends it to be lived (Deuteronomy 6:1-5; Joshua 1:7-9; Psalm 1:1-3; 119:1-2; John 10:10); and

Whereas, we believe 1) that God’s design for the expression of human sexuality is the union of a man and a woman in a lifelong marriage relationship, 2) that this plan is revealed in the creation texts (Genesis 1:26-31 and 2:18-25) and affirmed in the teaching of Jesus (Matthew 19:4-6), and 3) that sin has disrupted God’s design and led to various kinds of unnatural sexual acts and other sinful behaviour (Romans 1:18-32); and

Whereas, we believe 1) that God ordained heterosexual marriage as the relationship in which our natural desire for loving companionship, sexual fulfilment, and procreation should be satisfied (Genesis 1:28; 2:18-25), and 2) that violating the order of nature which God has established brings harmful consequences to the individual and to society (Romans 1:24-27); and

Whereas, we believe the Scriptures of both the Old and New Testaments condemn the practice of homosexuality (Leviticus 18:22; Leviticus 20:13; Romans 1:24-27; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, and 1 Timothy 1:8-11); and

Whereas, we believe that the pastors and chaplains of our Convention should uphold the moral standards taught in Scripture, be examples to their flocks, and be prepared to obey God rather than men (1 Timothy 3:1-7; 2 Timothy 3:14-4:5; Titus 1:6-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Acts 4:18-20),

– That the following resolution be adopted:

“BE IT RESOLVED that the solemnization of same-sex marriage is inconsistent with the interpretation of the Scriptures and contrary to the faith and practice of the Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches, and therefore we believe that pastoral leaders serving in the Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches should not officiate or co-officiate at any same-sex marriage ceremony.”

The following preamble was provided for the following resolution:

In light of 1) the 2003 Convention Assembly Resolution “that constituent churches are advised to develop and implement policies which celebrate and affirm marriages as a covenant union between a man and a woman in the presence of God, and the Christian wedding service is a fundamentally religious ceremony,” and 2) requests from Associations and Churches for assistance in developing policies that protect their religious freedom by stating that church properties shall not be used to celebrate or affirm marriages which are not a covenant union between a man and a woman to the exclusion of all others,

– That the following resolution be adopted:

“BE IT RESOLVED that the Convention Council and Staff undertake to provide assistance and guidance to our constituent Churches and Associations in developing policies to deal with these and related issues in a way that protects their religious freedom, honours both the independence and interdependence of the local church, and brings glory to the Lord of the Church.”