

## Gender

### **Beliefs about homosexual behavior and ministering to homosexual persons – Reaffirmed 2012**

Delegates unanimously reaffirmed the preciously adopted statement (below).

### **Beliefs about homosexual behavior and ministering to homosexual persons – Adopted 1992**

We the delegates to the 114th Annual Meeting of the Baptist General Conference gathering in Estes Park, Colo., June 22-28, endorse the following two-part resolution:

#### **Part 1**

Our affirmation that the Bible is the infallible Word of God with “supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct,” and our affirmation that “a Christian should live for the glory of God,” include the following six beliefs about heterosexuality and homosexuality:

1. We believe that heterosexuality is God’s revealed will for humankind and that, since God is loving, a chaste and faithful expression of this orientation (whether in singleness or marriage) is the ideal to which God calls all people.
2. We believe that a homosexual orientation is a result of the fall of humanity into a sinful condition that pervades every person. Whatever biological or familial roots of homosexuality may be discovered, we do not believe that these would sanction or excuse homosexual behavior, though they would deepen our compassion and patience for those who are struggling to be free from sexual temptations.
3. We believe there is hope for the person with a homosexual orientation and that Jesus Christ offers a healing alternative in which the power of sin is broken and the person is freed to know and experience his or her true identity in Christ and in the fellowship of his Church.
4. We believe that this freedom is attained through a process which includes recognizing homosexual behavior as sin, renouncing the practice of homosexual behavior, rediscovering healthy, nonerotic friendships with people of the same sex, embracing a moral sexual lifestyle, and in the age to come, rising from the dead with a new body free from every sinful impulse. This process parallels the similar process of sanctification needed in dealing with heterosexual temptations as well. We believe that this freedom comes through faith in Jesus Christ by the power of his Spirit.
5. We believe that all persons have been created in the image of God and should be accorded human dignity. We believe therefore that hateful, fearful, unconcerned harassment of persons with a homosexual orientation should be repudiated. We believe that respect for persons with a homosexual orientation involves honest, reasoned, nonviolent sharing of facts concerning the immorality and liability of homosexual behavior. On the other hand, endorsing behavior which the Bible disapproves endangers persons and dishonors God.

6. We believe that Christian churches should reach out in love and truth to minister to people touched by homosexuality, and that those who contend Biblically against their own sexual temptation should be patiently assisted in their battle, not ostracized or disdained. However, the more prominent a leadership role or modeling role a person holds in a church or institution of the Conference, the higher will be the expectations for God's ideal of sexual obedience and wholeness. We affirm that both heterosexual and homosexual persons should find help in the church to engage in the Biblical battle against all improper sexual thoughts and behaviors.

## Part 2

We further endorse the following affirmation as an implication of the previous six beliefs.

Since beliefs about the sinfulness of homosexual behavior, like beliefs about the sinfulness of lying, stealing, murder, greed, etc., are an essential part of our commitment to the supreme authority of the Bible in all matters of faith and conduct, and since a person who believes that lying, stealing, murder or greed are Biblically acceptable lifestyles would not and should not be deemed qualified to serve in the leadership of our Conference, or teach in its educational institutions, or serve as pastors of Baptist General Conference churches, or as teachers and principals of all church-sponsored schools, or as missionaries of the Baptist General Conference, therefore we affirm that, in the same way, those who believe that homosexual behavior is a Biblically acceptable lifestyle are not qualified to serve in the leadership of the Conference or to teach in its educational institutions or to serve as pastors of Baptist General Conference churches, or as teachers and principals of all church-sponsored schools, or as missionaries of the Baptist General Conference.

We further affirm that this affirmation is simply an effort to make explicit the implicit religious consensus of the Baptist General Conference concerning the meaning of Article One (The Word of God) and Article Eight (Christian Conduct) of our Affirmation of Faith adopted in 1951.

### Operation Rescue – Adopted 1989

Whereas a heinous evil has taken place in the termination of millions of unborn babies in the United States in recent years, and Whereas fifteen years of political effort on the part of the pro-life movement has failed to halt abortion-on-demand.

Whereas the movement called "Operation Rescue" has arisen at this crucial period as a means for Christians to endeavor to peacefully prevent the destruction of unborn infants and to influence public opinion,

Whereas we are informed that excessive legal measures have been taken against some of the leaders of this movement, and

Whereas we are informed that the magnitude of the problem is reflected in the fact that there have now been approximately 30,000 arrests in the two years of Operation Rescue compared with approximately 9,000 arrests during 10 years of the Civil Rights movement, and

Whereas we are informed that vast sums of money are being raised to support the proabortion cause, and

Whereas there is imperative need for the evangelical community to make clear its determination to help end the abortion-on-demand horror of our generation, and

Whereas the Scriptures command God's people to exercise themselves on behalf of the poor, the needy, the disadvantaged, and the powerless, and

Whereas there is need for considerable sums of money for the legal defense of leaders of Operation Rescue,

Be it resolved that the Baptist General Conference send a clear signal of its sympathy for and support of those who are seeking by peaceful and non-violent means to save the lives of unborn babies and to save their mothers from exploitation and to honor the Lord who has sole rights over life and death, by implementation of the following positive action:

That individuals within the Baptist General Conference be encouraged to send contribution directly to a fund to aid in the defense of those undergoing litigation as a result of being involved in Operation Rescue; and that this fund be well-publicized to the Conference constituency.

Be it further resolved that this action be subject to review by Conference legal counsel to determine that the Conference tax exemption is not jeopardized, and that there is no violation of the standing of the Conference as a member of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability, and that the board of overseers be authorized to approve implementation of the motion upon favorable resolution of any legal issues.”

#### **Homosexuality – Adopted 1987**

Whereas the practice of homosexuality is soundly condemned as a sin in the Bible, and whereas homosexual behavior contributes to the spread of AIDS and other incurable diseases, therefore be it resolved that the delegates to the 1987 annual meeting of the Baptist General Conference hereby state our opposition to the practice and promotion of homosexual behavior, and to encourage the members of the Baptist General Conference to seek biblical means of ministering to the homosexual community.