

ABCOM POLICIES and RESOLUTIONS CONCERNING ORDINATION

- 1) “Candidates who are avowed practicing homosexuals will not be recognized by the Committee on the Ministry.” Voted at ABCOM Annual Meeting 10/15/83 as part of the adoption of “Standards.”
- 2) “The American Baptist Churches of Maine will not recognize the license or ordination of any avowed and practicing homosexual person.” Voted at ABCOM Annual Meeting 10/19/01 as part of “Standards” revisions.
- 3) Resolution: Affirm God’s Calling of Men and Women – Voted at ABCOM Annual Meeting 10/18/86

“Whereas, The Gospel of Jesus Christ liberates all persons, female and male, to serve in those ministries to which they have been called by God and for which they have God-given talents; and
Whereas, for the church to be whole and effective in its witness, it must affirm both women and men of all races as full partners in its ministry; and
Whereas, the practice of partnership between women and men can be most effectively taught in the home with the church’s active help; and
Whereas, both men and women in church and society should share concern for strong family units; and,
Whereas, Churches, as well as secular organizations should offer employment and opportunities for all women and men with equal compensation, recognition, and appreciation; and
Whereas, men and women who now hold key leadership places in church and society have a special responsibility to act so that women have equal opportunity to move into these positions; and
Whereas, Christian men and women have a special call to be advocates and models for children and youth, giving them consistent personal support and encouragement to prepare for positions of leadership in church and society; and
Whereas, the church needs to use language that is in harmony with the partnership of women and men,
Therefore, Be it resolved that American Baptist Churches of Maine, in light of Biblical standards and Baptist precedents, strive to enable its member congregations to affirm God’s calling of men and women to all forms of service in the churches and to provide opportunities for women and men to express fully their gifts.”

- 4) Policy Regarding Credentials of Pastors of Churches Leaving the ABC Family – Adopted by the Committee on the Ministry 4/11/88

“The American Baptist Churches of Maine wishes to be supportive and helpful to all American Baptist Churches pastors. However, when it is perceived by the professional staff of American Baptist Churches of Maine that a congregation is moving toward terminating its relationship with the ABC/USA:

- 1) An Area Minister will have a personal conversation with a pastor, and share with him/her our policy that the ordination credentials of a pastor whose congregation has left American Baptist Churches and who continues to pastor that congregation, shall no longer be recognized by American Baptist Churches.
- 2) The Secretary of the Committee on the Ministry will send a follow-up letter to the pastor, interpreting how the Church action relates to ministerial standing.
- 3) When representatives of American Baptist Churches meet with officers of the local church to discuss mutual concerns, the matter of ministerial credentials will be incorporated into the conversation.

As such time as a congregation votes to leave the ABC, unless the pastor clearly state his/her desire for new placement with in the American Baptist Churches, the Committee on the Ministry will withdraw recognitions of ministerial credentials.”

(over)

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 areas, 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.