

Resolution Reaffirming the 1993 Resolution on Homosexual Behavior and 1998 Resolution on the Sanctity of Marriage:

Whereas, the Baptist General Association of Virginia approved a resolution at its annual meeting in 1993 affirming the Bible's teaching on the sinfulness of homosexual behavior; and

Whereas, the Baptist General Association of Virginia also approved a resolution at its annual meeting in 1998 affirming the sanctity of marriage as a lifelong commitment between one man and one woman; and

Whereas, the cultural climate in our country has changed dramatically since that time as it relates to both homosexual behavior and the definition of marriage; and

Whereas, in October 2014 the Commonwealth of Virginia began recognizing same-sex marriage in response to a ruling by a federal judge that Virginia's marriage amendment is unconstitutional; and

Whereas, in June 2015 the United States Supreme Court ruled that the United States Constitution grants the right to same-sex marriage, and consequently all fifty states must now recognize same-sex marriage;

Be it Resolved that the messengers to the Baptist General Association of Virginia meeting in Richmond, Virginia, November 9–11, 2015, continue to affirm the 1993 resolution of homosexual behavior and the 1998 resolution on the sanctity of marriage.

The 1993 resolution of homosexual behavior and the 1998 resolution on the sanctity of marriage are printed below for your reference.

1993 Resolution on Homosexual Behavior:

Recognizing that the autonomy of the local congregation historically has been affirmed in the Baptist life, the Virginia Baptist General Board [now called the Virginia Baptist Mission Board] makes the following statement:

We believe that homosexual behavior is one of many sins listed by the Scriptures, and that “the unrighteous will not inherit the Kingdom of God.” For the Bible says: “Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God” (I Corinthians 6:9-10). “And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was met” (Romans 1:27).

We affirm the biblical teaching that homosexual behavior is sinful and unacceptable for Christians. Therefore, we do not endorse elevating those who practice it to positions of leadership.

We make this statement in the spirit of the grace of the Lord Jesus, confessing our own sinfulness: *“For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God”* (Romans 3:23). We seek to bring all people to a loving and redeeming Savior who alone will judge between the redeemed and the lost.

1998 Resolution Affirming the Sanctity of Marriage:

The sanctity of marriage continues to face attacks from a variety of cultural attitudes and moral lapses, including those of public and religious leaders. Recent occurrences greatly heighten our awareness of the need to reclaim the moral authority of Biblical principles in marriage and family relationships. The world hungers for models that demonstrate the joy of family love and the rewards of marital fidelity. Today, as never before, believers need strongly to affirm and exemplify Biblical ideals in marriage and family.

God created man and woman in His own image. He established a covenant in marriage between them: *“Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh”* (Gen. 2:24). Families grow as husbands and wives follow God’s command to: *“...be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it...”* (Gen. 1:28). Mutual fidelity, respect and unselfish love characterize the marriage relationship God intends (Eph. 5:21-23).

God created the marriage covenant as a lifelong commitment between one man and one woman (Matt. 5:27-32). He judges and holds accountable those who break the covenant. He provides grace and the opportunity for reconciliation (Rom. 3:21-26). The Scriptures repeatedly bear witness to God’s love toward persons who sin. They also bear witness to God’s offer of pardon to all who seek His forgiveness through repentance and contrition (Lk. 18:9-30).

The Virginia Baptist Mission Board emphatically reaffirms the Biblical principles that undergird the sanctity of marriage, recognizes the Biblical call to accountability, and challenges all persons of faith to live out this ideal.

(This Affirmation on the Sanctity of Marriage was approved by the Virginia Baptist Mission Board on October 14, 1998, and recommended for adoption by the Baptist General Association of Virginia, which approved it at its annual meeting that year.)