

STATEMENT ON HOMOSEXUALITY

Homosexuality in and of itself is not by any means a phenomenon of modern times. What is phenomenal, however, is the increased openness by those who are practicing homosexuals and the increased tolerance, if not acceptance, by the American culture. As a Christian church we are alarmed by the notoriety and legal acceptance of a lifestyle which has so much potential for cultural decadence. Lest our silence as a denomination of the Christian faith be viewed as assent by our youth and by others both within and outside of our church, we recommend the following statement as indicative of our attitude toward homosexuality:

As a church we categorically, unreservedly and unequivocally reject the concept of homosexual marriage as being totally inconsistent with the biblical and theological conceptualization of marriage as viewed and practiced in our Zion. As A.M.E.'s we view marriage as a divine and sacred institution created by God as a union between man and woman. The Bible, as understood and interpreted by us and our theology, make no provision for a married relationship between two persons of the same sex. We, therefore, expect our ordained ministry to reserve the rite of marriage for those who are of different sexes. We expressly forbid our ministers to extend the marriage rites to homosexuals or two persons of the same sex.

As a church we do not recommend the homosexual lifestyle to our constituency. We believe that the normative sexual relationship is between man and woman. Any other sexual relationship we believe to be an abrogation and a perversion of the God-ordained process for the

procreation and continued life of the species.

The subject of homosexuality is especially critical for black people since institutional racism has already functioned historically to weaken black family life which has included emasculating black males, dehumanizing black females and psychologically enslaving black children. We view homosexuality as still another force which mitigates against the strength of black people. Black males can never come into their own as men and females cannot actualize their potential as women, and black children cannot develop to the fullest as persons through homosexual lifestyles.