



# Baptist Churches

## WESTERN AUSTRALIA

### Key Questions surrounding Human Sexuality A Suggested Template for BCWA Churches

The purpose of these suggestions is to provide our churches with a template for use in their documentation/websites/etc. to explain what/how “Welcoming not Affirming” means in actual practice for them as an individual church.

1. We choose not to view a person through the lens of their sexual expression. Our primary lens is that a person is created by God in his image and therefore worthy of respect.
2. We recognize that homosexuality, bisexuality and other expressions of sexuality are complex issue with varied understandings as to their causes and effects. We also recognize that every part of us is touched and tainted by sin and brokenness and this also includes our sexuality.
3. Our understanding of Scripture is that sexual expression is created and reserved for the marriage relationship which is defined by God in Genesis 2:24 and affirmed by Jesus in Matthew 19:4-6 as being between a man and a woman.
4. The call to follow Jesus includes how we express sexuality and so we believe it ought to be marked by faithfulness inside of marriage and abstinence outside of marriage.
5. Therefore, as we lead and love people in how sexuality is to be expressed, we will follow Jesus’ example by showing grace and speaking truth (John 1:14, 17). And just as Jesus did not condemn others for sin but called them to leave their sin, we will seek to do the same (John 8:10-11)

### Specific Questions

Baptist Churches of Western Australia have affirmed that marriage is a life-long commitment between a man and a woman and that marriage is the only appropriate context for sexual relations. The purpose of the questions that follow is not intended to deliberately single out specific sexual practices at the expense of others but to address key questions that are regularly asked by people both inside and outside of the church community.

1. **Is homosexuality a sin?** Homosexual practice is a sin - homosexual orientation is not a sin.
2. **Can a homosexual/bi-sexual/transgender/etc. people come to church?** Yes- and we hope they feel welcomed and accepted as people and we will do all that we can to encourage them to move forward on their spiritual journey.
3. **To what events/services/courses at church can a homosexual/bi-sexual/transgender/etc. people come?** To every environment we create - including weekend services and events, interest groups; parenting and marriage courses; cultural communities etc., and small groups.

4. **Can practicing homosexual/bi-sexual/etc. people become a member/partner of a Baptist Church?** No. Part of the responsibilities of membership/partnership is to 'Love Extravagantly' and is defined as a commitment to love God and others with all that we are and that 'love for God is best demonstrated by obedience to His Word, submission to His will and a life of service to others'. We believe that homosexual practice is not obedient to His Word and therefore not in submission to His will.
5. **Can practicing homosexual/bi-sexual/etc. people serve in the ministries of a Baptist Church?** No. People serving in the ministries of the church are required to sign a SafeChurch Code of Conduct that requires and states that those who serve in a ministry do so "in a manner consistent with Biblical teaching."
6. **We thought Christianity was about loving and accepting others. Why doesn't this church love and accept homosexuals/bi-sexual/transgender people?** We love all people regardless of their ethnic background, sexual expression or socio-economic status and we are commanded to express our love for God through 'our love for others. But we believe that love ought to be truthful (Eph 4:15). We accept all people by welcoming them into every environment at church. But acceptance does not mean agreement with or affirmation of every part of another person's beliefs, conduct, attitudes, decisions etc. In fact, the Gospel calls every one of us to forsake beliefs, behaviours, conduct, attitudes and decisions that are contrary to God's will for our lives.
7. **What is the church's position on marriage being redefined to include same-sex relationships?** We do not believe society is served well by redefining marriage away from God's creative intent for it - one man, one woman, united for life in a relationship of intimacy and companionship.
8. **So, is gay marriage 'bad' for society?** Any expression of human brokenness and sin, not just sexual, will diminish rather than enhance society.
9. **Should Christianity force its views about sexuality on the rest of society (e.g. current marriage definition)?** No. We believe the church should not impose its views on society but should respectfully and persuasively engage with society. We do this because we believe the Christian worldview is inherently positive and enhancing for society and we would seek to show society how this is the case.

**Document History and Version Control Record**

<b>Document Title:</b>		Key Questions Surrounding Human Sexuality A Suggested Template for BCWA Churches	
<b>Source Documents:</b>			
<b>Associated Internal Documents:</b>			
<b>Associated External Documents:</b>			
<b>Applies to:</b>			
<b>Approved by:</b>		The Baptist Union of Western Australia Council	
<b>Authorised Officer:</b>		Council Chair	
<b>Date of Approval:</b>		7 December 2015	
<b>Assigned Review Period:</b>		3 Years	
<b>Date of Next Review:</b>			
<b>Version Number</b>	<b>Version Date</b>	<b>Name/Authorised Officer</b>	<b>Amendment Details</b>
V 1.0	07/12/2015	Council Chair	Original Document Creation