

Religious Liberty Resolution

Whereas in its recent *Obergefell v. Hodges* decision, the United States Supreme Court gave constitutional protection to a type of civil marriage that is at variance with the traditional Christian view of marriage that has been embraced by the Baptist General Association of Virginia, and

Whereas, in argument before the Court it was suggested that its decision might produce conflicts with some persons' religious liberty, but these concerns were not addressed by the Court, and

Whereas, many Christians have concerns about the religious liberty implications of this decision as it is applied throughout the nation to churches, ministers, and individuals, and

Whereas, the Supreme Court in its prior decisions dating back to 1871 has outlined a robust doctrine of church autonomy that gives strong (but not absolute) First Amendment protection to churches, and

Whereas under the federal Religious Freedom Restoration Act, and similar state laws, religious liberty is given strong (but not absolute) protection from valid civil laws, and

Whereas a healthy society has little to fear or lose from the free exchange of ideas and the accommodation inasmuch as is possible under law of free religious expression and exercise,

Therefore, we encourage and petition all the branches of government (judicial, legislative, and executive) to respect religious liberty and to make reasonable accommodations to the religious practices of churches, ministers, individuals, and religious organizations without erring into an establishment of religion, and

We encourage our churches and members to be filled with neither fear nor anxiety, but with the Spirit of Christ, and to use these times as always to proclaim and practice more perfectly a positive Christian view of marriage, and

We call upon all who love and invoke the name of Jesus to use our Christian liberty to uphold the truth of the gospel of grace in a spirit of grace so that in our words, deeds, and attitudes Christ is revealed.