



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on July 11, 2011

Presbyterian Church USA Opens Door to Homosexual Clergy

A significant change to the constitution of the liberal Presbyterian Church (USA) — (PCUSA) — took effect July 10 that allows practicing homosexuals to serve as clergy in the storied mainline denomination. Last year delegates to the PCUSA endorsed the change to drop the requirement, written in the church's constitution, that church ministers live "in fidelity within the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman, or chastity in singleness." The change required approval by a majority of the church's 173 regional presbyteries, which occurred in May of this year, with Minnesota's Twin Cities district casting the deciding vote.



The change will still require the approval of individual presbyteries, and some districts have indicated that they will continue to prohibit openly homosexual ministers. As they have in other mainline denominations, homosexual activists have aggressively pushed for the PCUSA to endorse their lifestyle for the past decade or more, and more than 100 churches have left the denomination as it has increasingly compromised its scriptural position on sexuality.

Homosexual groups within the denomination celebrated the official change, with [More Light Presbyterians](#), which has been at the forefront of the campaign, declaring "a new era of equality" for the PCUSA. "Across this country members of welcoming and affirming congregations and ministries are telling the stories of faithful candidates who can now be considered for ordination," said Michael Adee, the group's executive director. "Years of sharing our lives, Bible study, and prayer helped Presbyterians from all walks of life to affirm ordination based on gifts and graces for ministry and God's love for all people."

The More Light website boasts that Adee was the "first openly gay Elder at Mount Auburn Presbyterian Church, Cincinnati, Ohio. A judicial charge was brought against the church for his ordination that went to the highest court in the Presbyterian Church (USA)."

Another of the group's leaders, the Rev. Janet Edwards (who in 2008 faced a trial by the denomination after she performed a homosexual marriage ceremony), said that with the change the PCUSA had moved "another step closer to fully embracing the love and inclusion taught to us by Jesus Christ. We know God is at work when almost all presbyteries voted more strongly for the welcome and inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender members than ever before, in the history of the Presbyterian Church."

But the Rev. Parker Williamson of the [Presbyterian Lay Committee](#), a group within the PCUSA that stresses faithfulness to Scripture and historical Christianity, said in a statement that with the change the denomination had "removed all sexual behavior standards from its constitution." Parker said that



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“Scripture is very clear that there are standards relating to our sexual behavior, but this denomination has decided it doesn’t have any standards.”

Similarly, members of the conservative [Presbyterians for Renewal](#) expressed their sorrow over the move, saying in a statement on their website, “We deeply grieve this unfaithful action, for it brings great harm to the life and witness of the PC(USA). We have prayed that our denomination would uphold this biblical standard, and we have worked to maintain it. But now a line has been crossed.”

Challenging what they argued is a severe compromise of biblical Christianity, the group encouraged faithful members of the PCUSA to continue affirming within their congregations and communities that:

- Jesus Christ is Lord — this has not changed and never will!
- The ultimate victory of Jesus Christ over sin and death has not been compromised! No action taken by the PC(USA) can threaten our Lord’s redemptive purpose.
- Scripture still clearly teaches that God intends the gift of sexual intimacy to be expressed within a lifelong covenant of marriage between a man and a woman. No vote by the PC(USA) can change God’s truth.

The Presbyterian Church USA is one of a handful of mainline Christian denominations that have compromised on the historic Christian teaching of the sinfulness of homosexuality. Others include the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), the United Church of Christ, the Episcopal Church, and the United Methodist Church.

By contrast, such denominations as the Southern Baptist Convention have continued to embrace the biblical view of sexuality, with the nation’s largest Baptist group affirming “God’s plan for marriage and sexual intimacy as one man, and one woman.”

However, while the [official position statement](#) of the Southern Baptist Convention condemns homosexual behavior as sin, it clarifies that it is not an “unforgivable sin,” affirming the traditional Christian (and scriptural) conviction that the “same redemption available to all sinners is available to homosexuals. They, too, may become new creations in Christ.”



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