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# A Conservative Resurgence Among American Baptists?

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A report published in [The Christian Century](#) indicates that liberals fear the rise of a conservative movement within the [American Baptist Churches in the USA \[ABCUSA\]](#). The issue that has ignited recent developments is homosexuality, specifically the growing acceptance of homosexuality within some ABCUSA circles.

As the [article](#) explains, “In a nutshell, many conservative churches are seeking rules ‘with teeth’ that would rid the [ABCUSA](#) of congregations that welcome gay and lesbian participants, sometimes ordaining gay pastors and celebrating same-sex unions. Many liberal-to-moderate churches hope to retain organizational havens for disfellowshipped congregations in keeping with Baptist traditions of ‘soul freedom’ and aversion to creeds.”

In 1991, the denomination adopted a statement declaring that “the practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching.” Nevertheless, some [ABCUSA](#) churches have acted in defiance of the statement, affirming homosexuality and affiliating with the [Association of Welcoming and Affirming Baptists \[AWAB\]](#). The response of evangelicals have been growing in intensity. Recently, two of the denomination’s regions threatened either to cut off funding or to leave the denomination if the issue of homosexuality is not settled in a biblical manner. A spokesman for [American Baptist Evangelicals](#) indicated that 64 West Virginia [ABCUSA](#) churches would leave the denomination if the issue is not settled by this June.

The [ABCUSA](#), which claims 1.4-million members, will hold its biennial meeting in Denver, July 1-4. Interestingly, the article indicates that those favoring homosexual rights are increasingly attracted to the [Alliance of Baptists](#), a liberal group that split from the [Southern Baptist Convention](#) in the 1980s.

READ FOR YOURSELF: [American Baptists Face Breakup Threats](#), *The Christian Century*, June 28, 2005. See also [background material](#) from American Baptist Evangelicals.

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