

Baptist College Says Disagreeing With Lesbian Speaker Is Against Christian Doctrine

American Baptist College (ABC) sees the protests for an upcoming lesbian speaker, but a spokesperson says they are shocked it's even an issue.

ABC Vice President for Administration, Finance and Legal Affairs Richard E. Jackson says Bishop Yvette Flunder, a married lesbian, will be speaking on social justice, and anyone not in agreement with her comments is out of line on Christian doctrine of serving the needy.

"I think that the first thing that we would have people to understand is that Bishop Flunder will be focusing most of her remarks and comments while at American Baptist College on the innovative nature of the ministry that she (Flunder) conducts that addresses the rights and needs of persons with HIV and AIDS," Jackson says. "And I think that is completely compatible and consistent with the belief and philosophy of Christian people and Christian institutions to care for the least of us in any given society."

The Nashville-based college promotes tolerance over moral absolutes, according to *One News*, and Jackson says he believes higher education institutes should be free of "biblical constraints."

The decision has garnered protests from the National Baptist Fellowship of Concerned Pastors, as well as many others.

"As a Baptist body believing that the Scripture really governs and dictates to us what our convictions are about God and our

Christ, the very fact of Yvette Flunder's being in a lesbian, same-sex marriage is a violation of what we believe," Pastor Randy Vaughn tells the *Baptist Press*. "And certainly her preaching in our sacred sanctuary is much of an abomination for us. And as a result, that requires an objection."

"It is so disappointing and disheartening that at the American Baptist College, where the land was bought and paid for by Baptists who took the Bible literally, their blood, sweat and tears are being trampled on," Pastor Dwight McKissick tells the *Baptist Press*. "We believe the Bible and its teachings. We believe homosexuality—as a matter of fact all the Bible talks about as sin—is sin."

But the college remains firm in its decision.

"American Baptist College has a long history of being an advocate for social justice, for having everybody have the right to express their own beliefs and to have opportunity that is accorded to other persons in the society," Jackson says. "But we also have a long legacy and tradition ... intolerance will not be tolerated. That's our message to the community at large."