

STATEMENT ON MARRIAGE AND SEXUAL RELATIONS FOR ADOPTION BY RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS

We believe in the creation and God as the Creator. We believe that God created man and that He created them male and female. As such, He created them different so as to complement and complete each other. God instituted monogamous marriage between male and female as the foundation of the family and the basic structure of human society. We believe that marriage is exclusively the holy union of one genetic male and one genetic female and evidenced by a religious ceremony we call a Ceremony of Holy Matrimony.

We also believe that legitimate Biblical sexual relations are exercised solely within marriage. Hence, sexual and behavioral activities such as, but not limited to, adultery, fornication, premarital sex, incest, polygamy, homosexuality, transgenderism, bisexuality, cross dressing, pedophilia, and bestiality are inconsistent with the teachings of the Bible and the Church. Further, lascivious behavior, the creation, viewing and/or distribution of pornography, and efforts to alter one's physical gender or gender related appearance are incompatible with a true Biblical witness. For this reason, all "sexual preferences" or "orientations" outside of strictly heterosexual marital relations are sinful and unacceptable to God. Accordingly, this ministry will not conduct a Ceremony of Holy Matrimony between individuals of the same biological sex nor will it conduct such a ceremony in any instance where the pastoral leadership of this church believes the relationship is not one that would honor God as a holy matrimony. Further, we will not condone or recognize same-sex marriages, civil unions, or domestic partnerships, even though the state or federal law recognizes such unions as civil marriage.

We believe that God was the first author of marriage. Over time, the Christian Church in America has confused "holy matrimony" with "civil marriage" by allowing the government to intrude into the affairs of the Christian church through the regulation of marriage. We believe that the government should have no part in determining the doctrine of the Christian church on any issue.

In order to clearly differentiate between holy matrimony and civil marriage, our ministers will no longer conduct a civil marriage ceremony. Our ministers are no longer authorized to sign civil marriage certificates. The ministers in our church are only authorized to conduct and solemnize religiously-based marriage through a Ceremony of Holy Matrimony. The ceremony will clearly distinguish itself from any civil marriage ceremony by recognizing that marriage between a husband and wife consists of a covenant among themselves and with God.

While we understand that many couples in the past may have been married in a non-religious civil ceremony, we will recognize those marriages in the future so long as the marriage is one that is consistent with this Statement on Marriage and Sexual Relations. In the future, we will encourage all couples to affirm their covenant before God through the Ceremony of Holy Matrimony. Like baptism or communion, we recognize the Ceremony of Holy Matrimony to be a distinctly religious rite that will only be performed in a manner consistent with this Statement on Marriage and Sexual Relations. A marriage that is not conducted through a Ceremony of Holy Matrimony will not necessarily be recognized as a legitimate marriage by this church. This is not to say, however, that a marriage ceremony performed under a different name, at another church, and in a manner consistent with this statement will not be recognized as valid.

This church may provide various services and ministries directed toward married couples such as marriage retreats and marriage counseling. This church may also require individuals to be married in order to participate in certain ministries. For these purposes, a mere civil marriage will not necessarily be recognized as a legitimate marriage by this church unless the marriage is consistent with this Statement on Marriage and Sexual Relations.

The property owned by this church will not be used for conducting a civil marriage ceremony. With regard to marriage ceremonies, the property owned by this church will only be used for conducting and celebrating a Ceremony of Holy Matrimony.

The following scriptures provide a basis for our doctrine on marriage: Genesis 2:24, I Corinthians 5:11, 6:9, 6:18-20, 7:1-3, 7:8-9; Romans 1:18-32; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; I Tim. 1:9-11.

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