

SOVEREIGN REDEEMER CHURCH MARRIAGE/ WEDDING DOCUMENT

We believe . . . That the Bible teaches that marriage is between one man and one woman only, and to recognize other unions as legitimate marriages would be contrary to SOVEREIGN REDEEMER CHURCH's understanding of scripture.

We affirm, that each person is unique, possesses dignity, and is worthy of respect. We also affirm that we are called to introduce each person to the loving, reconciling, Gospel ministry of Jesus Christ.

As Christians we seek to demonstrate God's love to all people, but we will not compromise our convictions on marriage as defined by scripture. Therefore, be it resolved that:

1. As a matter of belief, doctrine and practice, SOVEREIGN REDEEMER CHURCH reserves the term "marriage" for the covenant relationship between one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others.

2. And that SOVEREIGN REDEEMER CHURCH establishes the standard that all individuals, who perform marriages, will not officiate at or co-officiate at any marriage outside of the membership of SOVEREIGN REDEEMER CHURCH'S (excluding elder-approved exceptions) previously stated definition of marriage.

4. And that the facilities of SOVEREIGN REDEEMER CHURCH will not be used for weddings or receptions where the marriage union is contrary to our belief of scripture as stated in this document.

FURTHER CLARIFICATION OF SRC'S VIEW OF BIBLICAL MARRIAGE

We believe that the Bible is fundamentally true and undeniably inerrant. Our Confession does not allow us to waiver on this point, and neither do our consciences, which are held in bondage by the Word of God. We believe that all Scripture is breathed out by God and designed for teaching, reproof, correction and teaching in righteousness (2 Timothy 3:16). The Bible is from God and is not the words of mere men, and it works in believers to teach us truth (1 Thessalonians 2:13). It is impossible for God to lie (Hebrews 6:18). The words of God are flawless (Psalm 12:6).

We believe that God is unchanging and that His word, as well as its interpretation, is also unchanging. Men are not permitted to interpret God's Words in a way contrary to its original interpretation, which proceeded from God Himself (2 Peter 1:20-21). What God has revealed of his righteousness through his Law is unchanging (Matthew 5:18). The Words of God remain forever (Matthew 24:15). God reveals his standards and teachings once and for all, and they do not change from culture to culture (Jude 1:3).

We believe that marriage was created by God, defined by God, and serves the purpose of pointing us to God. God himself created marriage, and created it to be between sexually compatible spouses of both male and female (Genesis 2:18-24). Jesus – the second person of the Holy Trinity - clearly taught that marriage was between a man and woman (Matthew 19:46, Mark 10:6-9). Marriage was created by design to teach us to holy, sacred, abiding, loyal love that Jesus has for his people and serves as a metaphor toward that end (Ephesians 5:23-33).

We believe that homosexuality is condemned by God as an aberration of his will, as an assault upon his creative design, and indicates a fallen nature in need of redemption. Homosexuality is revealed in the Bible as an abomination before God (Leviticus 18:22, Leviticus 20:13). Homosexuality is one sin – among others – implicitly mentioned as one that, if unrepentant, keeps someone from the Kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 6:9-11). Homosexuality is given in the New Testament as an example of one who suppresses truth in unrighteousness and has a depraved heart (Romans 1:26-28). Homosexuality is contrary to sound teaching (1 Timothy 1:10). Homosexuality is given as an example of sins that are under the condemnation of God (Jude 1:7).

We believe that Christians are to speak prophetic truth into the world, directly from the pages of the Holy Bible, and to proclaim a Gospel that can save us from sin. We're to preach truth when it is popular and when it is unpopular (2 Timothy 4:2). We are to contend for the faith as it was given to us (Jude 1:3). We are to stand firm in the face of culture or societal change (Philippians 1:27). We must not turn our backs on God's commands in the face of opposition (2 Peter 2:21). We will not reject our faith or our conscience (1 Timothy 1:19).

We believe that Jesus died to pay for the sin of homosexuality, sexual perversion, or any other offense for those who trust in Christ and repent of those sins. Jesus died for unrighteous people (1 Peter 3:18). We have access to God not by good works, but by grace (Romans 5:2). Regardless of our past sin, we can come to God through Christ (Ephesians 3:12). The required response to this Good News is to repent of sins, including homosexuality (Acts 2:38, Mark 1:5, Luke 24:47, Acts 5:31).

Given these beliefs, of which we are not allowed to compromise or yield, we cannot keep quiet in the surrounding cultural applause or societal sanctioning of homosexuality in the guise of matrimony. Rather, we are left with no choice but to preach the truth in this inconvenient and trying season.

We assert that same-sex unions are not tantamount to marriage. A federal court does not have jurisdiction in the eyes of God. Just as a divorce recognized by the state may not be recognized by God, a union given the title of "marriage" does not make it so in the eyes of Almighty God. Marriage is between one man and one woman. Although opposite-sex couples can also, through their misbehavior, make a mockery of marriage, it does not mean we are permitted to approve or sanction unions that by definition are not marriage. Therefore, as a

church under the leadership of Christ and not under the jurisdiction of the state of Montana, we do not recognize a same-sex union as a marriage.

We assert that the state is in error to recognize same-sex unions as a marriage. This court – and by their obedience to this ruling, county clerks across Montana and applicable state governing audiences that recognize the court's usurping of God's higher verdict on this issue – are violating God's revealed will for governing authorities, that exist to reward good and punish evil (Romans 13:3).

We assert that any church that recognizes same-sex unions as marriage or as anything but a violation of God's will has placed as their head mortal man, rather than Jesus Christ. No doubt, many churches will shrug their shoulders to the court's decree and march toward societal compromise. We can only mark those that cause divisions contrary to what we're taught in the Scripture (Romans 16:17) and warn them otherwise. We can only assert Isaiah 5:20, "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!" The very moment a church rejects the verdict of Christ for a verdict handed down by men, is the moment we fail to be a church in the same way a same-sex union fails to be a marriage; calling it so does not make it such.

We assert our preaching of God's Law, to make clear God's Gospel. If we fail to call men to repentance by approving what God detests, we are unable to preach the Gospel that saves from such sins. Jesus came to die for sinners, and those who recognize themselves as such (Romans 5:8). To take away a preaching on sin (including the sin of homosexuality) is to effectively take away a teaching that will bring someone to repentance and a saving knowledge of Jesus.

Finally, we are well aware that neither society nor short-term history will not judge us well. We are aware that in a very short time, a great swath of our culture will declare us to be bigoted, judgmental, uncharitable or perhaps even *unchristian* in our position. And yet, we recognize that history is not our judge, and neither is our society. God is our judge, and it's upon his Word, that we stand. We can do no other.

**This statement was originally adopted by the Fellowship Baptist Church in Sidney, MT. It has been made available through Reformation Montana to other Montana churches that would like to adopt it as their own statement on their website, local publications, or elsewhere.*