STATEMENT ON MARRIAGE AND HUMAN SEXUALITY

MARRIAGE

We believe, based on the teaching of the Scriptures in both the Old and New Testaments, that marriage is an institution ordained by God from the foundation of the world and intended as a lifelong covenantal union (Mal. 2:14-15, Prov. 2:17, Gen. 2:24) of one biological man and one biological woman. This idea is supported by the account of creation in Genesis chapters 1 and 2.

* Genesis 1:26-28 instructs that God created mankind in His own image, both male and female. Both men and women, therefore, are fully created in the image of God, even as this passage implies that a unity of one man and one woman is in some way important to fully represent the image of God in mankind.
* Genesis chapter 2 provides a more detailed account in which God created the first man, Adam, and said that it was not good for him to be alone (Genesis 2:18). Adam was not emotionally lonely, in that he was enjoying perfect communion with God at that time. The human race, however, was not yet complete. God indicated that He would make “a suitable helper for him.” God brought all of the animals to Adam, but none of them was a suitable helper for him, so God then created Eve, the first woman, from part of Adam himself. God did not create a second man to be Adam’s helpmate, nor an assortment of multiple women, but rather one woman. Together they were man and wife and had “no shame” or sin in their union with each other (Genesis 2:15-25).

Jesus Christ reaffirmed the teaching of the Old Testament when He said,

“Haven’t you read, he replied, that at the beginning the creator made them male and female and said, ‘for this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife and the two will become one flesh.’ So, they are no longer two, but one. Therefore, what God has joined together, let not man separate” (Matthew 19:4-6).

Scripture further states that marriage is not merely a human institution but is most centrally a special, divine metaphor that is supposed to illustrate the union of Christ and the church (Ephesians 5:22-32). For this reason, also, only a union between a biological man and a biological woman can be a proper marriage because a union between two men, two women, or one man and multiple women or any collection of people could not properly illustrate the relationship between Christ and His church.

LIFESTYLES

The Scriptures instruct that believers should only marry fellow believers (e.g., 1 Cor 7:39). The Scriptures further instruct that the “goods” of marriage include companionship (Gen 2:18), procreation and child raising (Gen 1:28, Deut 6:6-7), and the context of sexual integrity (1 Cor 7:2, 9).

The Bible condemns all forms of sexual immorality and encourages Christians to flee from it because of its destructive effects, and because the body of the Christian is the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:12-20). Included among a variety of lifestyles condemned in Scripture are those associated with adultery, prostitution, and homosexuality (1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

The Lord makes it clear that it is not only sinful to engage in sexual immorality but also to approve of such sins in others or encourage their practice. As a result, to maintain our consistent Christian witness, we cannot sanction, approve, or promote in any way lewd conduct, adultery, fornication (a sexual relationship between any unmarried people), incest, pedophilia, polyamory, polygamy, bestiality, homosexual unions, transgender behavior, nor the creation, viewing or distribution of pornography. These expressions of sexual immorality are made clear by other verses throughout the Old Testament, as well as by these and other passages in the New Testament.

GRACE PROPERTY AND PASTORS

As a result of these above-described Scriptural beliefs and our belief in the need for a practice of fidelity to these beliefs, it is our policy that the facilities of this church may not be used for any ceremony that in any way approves of, solemnizes, supports or allows same-sex unions, polygamist unions, or any union which, in the judgment of the Elders, clearly contradicts the clear Scriptural teaching on marriage. It is also the policy of the church that no pastor or member of the church staff shall officiate at any ceremony designed to solemnize, promote, create, or approve of such a union, whether in our facilities or off-site. Nor may any member of the church enter into such a union without being subject to church discipline.

CIVIL UNIONS

Although the state has its own valid interest in which parties it recognizes as married, the Lord, and not the state, is the designer and definer of marriage. Therefore, a civil government’s sanction of a union will be recognized as a legitimate marriage by the church only to the extent that it is consistent with the definition of marriage found in this Policy Statement.

CONCLUSION

Grace follows what the Bible reveals as the "sure foundation" of the teachings of Jesus Christ and his apostles (Matthew 7:24-29 and 1 Corinthians 14:37). The church is called to teach and practice these things and is not at liberty to depart from them for a different authority if it is to authentically bear the name "Christian." Though we strive to live peaceably with all people and to obey legitimate government authority, in instances involving matters as foundational as marriage we must ultimately obey God rather than man if the two come into conflict (Acts 4:18-22).

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