

SESSION STATEMENT ON SAME-SEX MARRIAGE

FEBRUARY, 2015

“COMING BEFORE OUR DENOMINATION IS A VOTE TO CHANGE THE HISTORIC DEFINITION OF MARRIAGE FROM THE BIBLICAL HERITAGE OF BEING BETWEEN A MAN AND A WOMAN (GENESIS 2:23-25; MATTHEW 19:4-6; MARK 10:6-8) TO AN ACT WHICH IS A "UNIQUE COMMITMENT BETWEEN TWO PEOPLE." THIS PROPOSED ACTION IS INTENTIONED TO ELEVATE THE STATUS OF SAME-SEX MARRIAGE TO THE LEVEL OF BEING A BIBLICAL MODEL THAT ENGENDERS FAITHFULNESS TO THE SCRIPTURAL WITNESS.

WE BELIEVE THAT THE EFFORT TO SANCTION GAY/LESBIAN MARRIAGE IN THE CHURCH IS CONTRARY TO THE INTENTION OF SCRIPTURE. WE RESPECT THAT SEXUALITY IS AN INTENSELY PERSONAL PART OF THE HUMAN EXPERIENCE, BUT STILL ONLY ONE DIMENSION OF OUR HUMANITY. WE BELIEVE THAT JESUS DESIRES TO BE IN A RELATIONSHIP WITH EACH AND EVERY PERSON IN OUR COMMUNITY, AND WE SEEK TO WELCOME ALL PEOPLE REGARDLESS OF ANY AGE, BACKGROUND, ETHNICITY, GENDER OR SEXUAL ORIENTATION TO LEARN ABOUT AND FOLLOW JESUS.

WE ALSO BELIEVE THAT ALL PEOPLE CAN FIND THEIR PRIMARY IDENTITY BY SEEING THAT THEY ARE CREATED BY AND LOVED BY GOD. OUR MOST SINCERE UNDERSTANDING IS THAT GOD'S INTENTION FOR SEXUAL INTIMACY IS TO BE EXPRESSED IN A LASTING COVENANT RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN A HUSBAND AND A WIFE. RECOGNIZING THAT CONGREGATIONS MAY DIFFER WIDELY ON THIS ISSUE, AND THAT MANY IN OUR OWN FELLOWSHIP DIFFER ON THIS ISSUE, WE BELIEVE THAT WE, AS CHRIST'S PEOPLE, ARE CALLED TO A COMMUNITY LIFE, WHICH THROUGH HONOR AND RESPECT FOR MANY HUMAN DISTINCTIONS AND DIFFERENCES, STAYS CENTRALLY FOCUSED ON COMMITTING OUR LIVES TO JESUS.”