

*Below is a statement put forth by the Stated Clerk of the PCA regarding our belief about marriage. Covenant Presbyterian Church affirms this document in its entirety as representing what we believe concerning marriage.*

On March 17, 2015 the Presbyterian Church (USA) approved language that allows its ministers to officiate at same-sex marriages in its churches. The change comes after the General Assembly and a majority of that denomination's 171 presbyteries approved an amendment to their *Book of Order* that describes marriage as "a unique relationship between two people, traditionally a man and a woman."

There are several Presbyterian denominations in the United States. The Presbyterian Church in America (PCA), formed in 1973 as an evangelical denomination in the Reformed theological tradition, is the second largest. We, like other evangelical, conservative, orthodox, and traditional Christians from many branches of the Christian faith, believe that, from creation, God ordained the marriage covenant to be a unique bond between one man and one woman. This biblical understanding is what the Church has always believed, taught, and confessed. Therefore, we believe that the divinely sanctioned standard for sexual activity is fidelity within a marriage between one man and one woman or chastity outside of such a marriage.

Throughout history, there has often been a conflict between what the Church has believed, taught, and confessed and the society to which the Church ministers. The Church, in contrast to the broader culture, is to base her views and practices on authoritative and timeless divine revelation found in the Holy Scriptures, and not on the changing and frequently subjective social practices within the society. The Church, therefore, has certain unchanging objective standards of biblical ethics.

This is especially challenging in this post-modern era of relativism. We think that the comparatively recent interpretation that biblical prohibitions against same-sex intimacy do not apply to "a same-sex marriage" is based on false premises and faulty reasoning and, therefore, is erroneous – no matter how well-intentioned.

The PCA in both its doctrinal standards (*Westminster Confession of Faith*, Chapter 24 "Of Marriage and Divorce") and church polity (*Book of Church Order*, Chapter 59, "The Solemnization of Marriage") affirms biblical marriage as being between one man and one woman. Neither the General Assembly nor any of the Presbyteries nor any Session (board of elders) of any congregation that is presently a member of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) has redefined marriage. Nor does the PCA intend to do so.

As we affirm what is sometimes called a traditional view of marriage, which we prefer to call biblical marriage, we seek to follow the apostolic practice of "speaking the truth in love." We reach out to all persons with the Good News by which we are being saved that "Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures."

*Roy Taylor is the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America.*