



June 30, 2015

At the meeting of the Regional Executive Directors in Denver on June 29th, 2015, Dr. David Whitaker led the board in a discussion of the recent Supreme Court decision on same-sex marriage. The following was adapted from an earlier statement created by Dr. Whitaker and is the board's official response to that decision -

Recently, the Supreme Court, by a ruling of 5-4, declared same-sex marriage a constitutional right, making it the law of the land. Although this decision will not change our view of marriage, it will have significant implications in how we affirm and live as the "Church" in the midst of ever changing cultural values.

We are grieved, but grateful that we do not need to fear. God is not surprised. In fact, He has privileged us to be here, in this moment, at this time, to be His Church to a world who does not know Him. The mission of the Church is not to change the culture, but rather, just as we have been reconciled to God, we have been given the *"ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."* (2 Corinthians 5:18-21)

We have experienced that gospel-provided reconciliation and have been given a gospel purpose and responsibility to respond to our world as our Savior did, who was *"full of grace and truth."* We are called to love...as we have been loved. We are called to kindness...as our heavenly Father has shown us incredible kindness. We are called to generosity in our grace...as the Father's grace has been lavished on us. We are called to stand upon and speak for God's truth...and to do so with conviction, "speaking the truth in love."

We believe we are called to mourn...to mourn over the sin of our country...to mourn and repent over our own sin that has created the climate for the name of Jesus Christ to be despised. Those without Christ will do what those who have never experienced His life will do. But what about we, His Church who have experienced His grace? Have we not taken our own sins lightly, while pointing out the sins of others to make ourselves feel better? Have we not taken our gospel mission lightly?

The Apostle Paul says to the Church, as he continues his thought (very appropriate to our day). 2 Corinthians 6:1-11 (NLT) *"As God's partners, we beg you not to accept this marvelous gift of God's kindness and then ignore it. ² For God says, "At just the right time, I heard you. On the day of salvation, I helped you." Indeed, the "right time"*

is now. Today is the day of salvation." This is the time to speak into our culture with the incredible message of hope that we were given when we needed it. And how are we to live? "3 We live in such a way that no one will stumble because of us, and no one will find fault with our ministry. 4 In everything we do, we show that we are true ministers of God..."

But this will not be easy...and it may be costly: "...We patiently endure troubles and hardships and calamities of every kind. 5 We have been beaten, been put in prison, faced angry mobs, worked to exhaustion, endured sleepless nights, and gone without food."

Notice how the church is to distinguish itself: 6 We prove ourselves by our purity, our understanding, our patience, our kindness, by the Holy Spirit within us, and by our sincere love. 7 We faithfully preach the truth. God's power is working in us. We use the weapons of righteousness in the right hand for attack and the left hand for defense. 8 We serve God whether people honor us or despise us, whether they slander us or praise us. We are honest, but they call us impostors. 9 We are ignored, even though we are well known. We live close to death, but we are still alive. We have been beaten, but we have not been killed. 10 Our hearts ache, but we always have joy. We are poor, but we give spiritual riches to others. We own nothing, and yet we have everything. 11 Oh, dear Corinthian friends! We have spoken honestly with you, and our hearts are open to you."

This is the kind of Church that our culture has needed and (in many cases), has been unwilling to live out. We believe that's very much the reason we find our country in this condition. We have to get back to our original priority. It's not too late...for those in our communities (including the LGBT community) to experience the life of Jesus Christ. But that will happen only if we show "understanding, patience, kindness, sincere love...if our hearts are open to all...by the power of the Holy Spirit working in us!"

Let us be His Church!

Dr. David Whitaker
Executive Director, Next Generation
Churches

Dr. Jim Leary
Executive Director, Mission Mid-
Atlantic

Rev. Steve Engram
Executive Director, Southwest
Church Connections

Rev. Pat Phinney
Executive Director, CB North Central

Dr. Mark Hoeffner
Executive Director, CB Northwest

Dr. Jim Smith
Executive Director, Pacific Church
Network

Rev. Stan Rieb
Executive Director, Rocky Mountain
Church Network
Facilitator for Mission Northeast

Rev. Andy Meverden
Director of Chaplaincy

Resources:

Below, I've added some links that might be of help to you. Blessings on you, as we continue together, to forge a movement for the gospel of Jesus Christ!

Here is the .pdf file from Alliance Defending Freedom: [Protecting Your Ministry from Orientation and Gender Identity](#)

Additionally :

Here is a statement by Erik Stanley, Alliance Defending Freedom, for churches to consider: [What Your Church Needs to Know - And Do - About the Court's Marriage Ruling](#)

Here is the update from *Christianity Today*: [Supreme Court: States Can't Ban Same-Sex Marriage](#)

Here is a statement from Al Mohler: [Mohler Responses to Supreme Court's Same-Sex Marriage Decision](#)

Here is a statement from NAE: [Supreme Court Redefines Marriage](#) and [God Defined Marriage](#)

Here is a statement made by a diverse coalition of evangelical leaders assembled by the ERLC: [Here We Stand: An Evangelical Declaration on Marriage](#)

Here is a *Christianity Today* Editorial written by Mark Galli: [Six Things To Do after the Supreme Court Decision on Gay Marriage](#)

Here is a statement by Ray Ortlund about Marriage and the Gospel: [What is Marriage, According to the Bible?](#)

Here is an article by Timothy Keller, [The Bible and Same Sex Relationships: A Review Article](#)

Here is a summary of the decision by Joe Carter: [Explainer: What You Should Know About the Supreme Court's Same-Sex Marriage Ruling](#)

Here is a statement from John Piper: [So-Called Same-Sex Marriage: Lamenting the New Calamity](#)