

## **Protecting Your Church Regarding Same Sex Issues**

Same sex marriage (or union) is a hot button issue that can have serious legal ramifications.

The truth is that your church and staff do not need to conduct, participate in, or rent your building for, same sex ceremonies. It is a question of religious freedom. However, to ensure it is legally defined as a religious issue and not an act of discrimination, your religious belief needs to be clearly stated in your church By-Laws and other policy documents.

After months of research and securing legal counsel we recommend against a long, complicated, biblically detailed "position paper" being included in your By-Laws. Briefer is better. Keep any biblical position paper as a separate document.

Instead, if you have an "Affirmation of Faith" section in your Constitution or By-Laws ("We Believe" statements), you might consider adding the following statement:

***Christian Marriage.*** We believe that Christian marriage is a sacred institution ordained of God for the happiness of mankind and the propagation of the race. It is the spiritual and physical union of one man and one woman and, according to the scriptural ideal, is to be broken only by death.

We are encouraging this to be placed after the belief statement on **Christian Conduct** in the current Converge Worldwide Affirmation of Faith

Your facilities rental and usage policies should refer to this statement as a criteria for determining those who will use your facilities.