



THE  
PRESBYTERIAN  
COALITION



## G.A. Committee on Marriage Wants to Hear from You!

July 14, 2009

**Dear Friend,**

If state laws allow same-gender marriage, should the Church marry couples of the same sex? What should the Church's response be to a same-sex couple who were married by civil authorities? Or to a couple who legally can be married by the state but who want a church blessing or wedding? A special committee of the PC(USA)'s General Assembly is seeking your response by August 16.

Addressing the Christian response to matters of sexuality, Thomas Gillespie, now-retired President of Princeton Seminary, recently told church members that we Presbyterians have got to learn to become counter-cultural.

Dr. Gillespie noted that Presbyterians historically have been leaders of the culture. But pressures and trends in recent decades have produced a culture that needs to be reclaimed by the Gospel.

If we Presbyterians are going to be of any use to the world around us in our own time, we shall have to see ourselves less as riding on the front edge of culture and more as re-shapers--as reformers--of culture. We will have to distinguish ourselves as people who live by a different standard, by different values, that come from Scripture's unchanging word. We will have to find the courage to respond with a grace-filled "no," to what the crowds around us are pressing for a "yes" to.

### **Culture and Church on Same-Sex Relationships**

Same-sex relationships present us with the most pressing opportunity to bring the grace of the Gospel to a society that seems to be moving farther and farther away from God's good purposes for his creation.

The General Assembly of 2008 created a special committee to study civil unions and Christian marriage. The committee, appointed by G.A. Moderator Bruce Reyes-Chow, will report its recommendations to the 219th G.A. in July of 2010.

### **Committee issues invitation for pastoral response**

After its recent meeting the committee issued an [invitation](#) to Presbyterians for input on one of the questions they are charged by their mandate to address: "What is the place of covenanted same-gender partnerships in the Christian community?"

Especially if you and your church have engaged this question in a real-life pastoral context, the committee would benefit from knowing how God's grace is extended in situations where "yes" is harmful and "no" may be the beginning of a whole new understanding of love. We urge you to respond to the committee with your own pastoral guidance. Alert others who are similarly concerned about these pastoral issues to write to the committee. Please also send us a copy of your comments to the committee. We will not use them publicly without your permission.

The deadline for responses is August 16. Responses may be emailed to the committee at [civilunion.marriage@pcusa.org](mailto:civilunion.marriage@pcusa.org), or mailed to Civil Union and Christian Marriage Committee, Office of the General Assembly, Room 4621, 100 Witherspoon Street, Louisville, KY 40202-1396. Copies to me may be sent to [terry@presbycoalition.org](mailto:terry@presbycoalition.org).

Working with you for faithfulness in the PC(USA),

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