

MARRIAGE AND RELIGIOUS FREEDOM: Fundamental Goods That Stand or Fall Together

An Open Letter from Religious Leaders in the United States to All Americans

Released January 12, 2012

Open letter and signatories found here: <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/marriage-and-family/marriage/promotion-and-defense-of-marriage/ecumenical-and-interreligious-activities.cfm>

Executive Summary:

We, as representatives of a broad array of faiths, join together to affirm that marriage, the union of one man and one woman, must be promoted and protected for its own sake and for the common good. We also agree that redefining marriage will incur grave consequences, including a deleterious impact on religious liberty. Altering the definition of marriage will change not just one law but hundreds, even thousands, of laws. There will be government mandates, requiring the recognition and accommodation of so-called same-sex “marriages,” that pose a critical threat to institutions and individuals who for reasons of faith and conscience will resist the law’s compulsion. Cases involving criminal and civil penalties and the denial of grants and other government benefits are already occurring and will only increase in number and severity if more jurisdictions redefine marriage. The law not only will coerce and impose disincentives, but will also teach that religious objectors must be marked as if they were bigots. We encourage all people of good will to protect marriage as the union between one man and one woman, and to consider carefully the far-reaching consequences for the religious freedom of all Americans if marriage is redefined. May all of us work together to strengthen and preserve the unique meaning of marriage and the precious gift of religious liberty.

Signatories come from the following communities:

Agudath Israel of America	Fellowship of Evangelical Churches	National Association of Evangelicals
Anglican Church in North America	The Foursquare Church	National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference
Assemblies of God	Free Methodist Church USA	North American Lutheran Church
The Brethren Church	General Association of General Baptists	Open Bible Churches
Bruderhof Communities	General Council of Christian Union Churches	The Salvation Army
The Christian & Missionary Alliance	Grace Communion International	Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints	Great Commission Churches	United Brethren in Christ Church, USA
Church of the Nazarene	International Pentecostal Church of Christ	United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
Conservative Congregational Christian Conference	International Pentecostal Holiness Church	Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America
Evangelical Free Church of America	Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod	Vineyard USA
Evangelical Friends Church, North America	Missionary Church, Inc.	The Wesleyan Church