



WEDDING POLICY

AGAPE CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP - Onaway, Michigan
An Outreach of Children's Television Ministries, Inc.

INTRODUCTION

The joining of a man and woman in marriage is the foundation of God's plan for His people and His world. Christians should marry in the Lord. It is fitting that the local church be involved in the whole process. To assist you in planning your wedding the leadership of CTM has developed and adopted the following policies and guidelines.

1. POLICY FOUNDATIONS

The purpose of this wedding policy is to answer questions, eliminate confusion and give clear direction to those who seek to be married under the guidance and authority of the pastoral staff of AGAPE CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP. The following directives will form a foundation for this policy and will guide the ministerial staff and prospective marriage participants.

- a. Marriage is ordained by God and all ceremonies will be God-centered in word and deed [Genesis 2:18; 1 Corinthians 10:31].
- b. Marriage is the covenant act of one man and one woman uniting together as husband and wife [Genesis 1:27; 2:22-25]. By "man" and "woman" we refer to that gender manifested by God at conception and formed by God in the womb and revealed by God at birth. Marriage between a man and woman is declared in Scripture to create a "one-flesh" union [Genesis 2:23-24; Matthew 19:5], which in turn signifies the union between Christ and His Church [Ephesians 5:22-33].
- c. Based on the revealed truths of the Bible, God's Word and as stated above in "section b" – Children's Television Ministries, Inc. and its outreach, AGAPE CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP, accepts the Biblical definition of marriage and excludes all others. AGAPE CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP will not allow, recognize, participate in or support any other concept or definition of marriage. Any relationship between two entities other than one man and one woman in a claimed marriage is contrary to God's Word and our articles of faith.
- d. The ministerial staff and facilities of AGAPE CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP will be used only for the wedding ceremonies of those who have placed their faith for salvation in Jesus Christ alone. They will only officiate at marriages of Christian believers to Christian believers [1 Corinthians 7:39; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18]. No minister or member of the church staff shall officiate at any ceremony designed to solemnize, promote, create, or approve a same sex-union, a polygamist union, or any other union which is inconsistent with our beliefs.
- e. Any minister involved in a wedding ceremony must be in agreement with the Articles of Faith of Children's Television Ministries, Inc. with permission by the CTM presiding Minister. Required counseling outside of AGAPE CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP must be approved by him.
- f. The CTM ministerial staff will humbly and compassionately work through any issue that may impact the prospective marriage, however, they will not participate, nor will the facilities be used for marriages involving divorced participants with living former spouses.

g. Every marriage performed at CTM must align with the beliefs of the ministry. The Minister retains his personal right to refuse to officiate any wedding for any reason.

PLEASE review CTM's positions on issues related to marriage presented at the bottom of this policy paper.* This ministry facility or property shall not be used by any person or group that advances, advocates, or engages in practices that contradict the policies, purposes, and goals of Children's Television Ministries, Inc.

2. PRE-COUNSELING PERSPECTIVES

All couples desiring marriage will arrange a time with the AGAPE CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP Minister who will share pre-counseling perspectives for marriage. This pre-counseling meeting will determine if the Minister at AGAPE CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP will be involved in the marriage process. This pre-session will also describe the pre-marital counseling requirements. If requirements are met and agreed upon – the couple will submit an application to be married at the church.

3. APPLICATION TO BE MARRIED AT THE CHURCH

The "Wedding Application" form must be submitted to the church in a timely manner. It is important to make application as early as possible to reserve your chosen date on the church calendar and to allow adequate time for counseling.

4. FACILITIES

The facilities of Children's Television Ministries, Inc. can be used for weddings by couples who are attending members of the fellowship, children of members, and those approved by the ministry leadership. These couples must complete a pre-marital preparation program provided or approved by our ministerial staff.

a. Auditorium

1) The auditorium of CTM will seat approximately 50 people.

2) The auditorium may be decorated for the wedding. No decorations that will leave marks, holes or coloring on walls or furniture will be used. All decorations are to be removed from the auditorium following the wedding ceremony.

The auditorium will be restored to use before the next scheduled church service.

The wedding couple is responsible for making arrangements for set up, decorations, clean-up and restoration for use of the church facility.

3) Only drip-less candles are permitted for wedding ceremonies.

4) Unattached furniture may be moved. The pulpit, communion table and other furniture/equipment will be stored in a side room.

5) Decorating of facility may take place after the Wednesday evening service, or at the pastor's direction.

NOTE: Church staff should be notified in advance of decoration times, rehearsal times and wedding party arrival times to insure that the building is unlocked.

b. Fellowship Room

- 1) The fellowship room can seat approximately 50 people.
- 2) Tables, chairs, serving items can be used by the wedding party. The wedding party will provide any food, cups, plates, paper-ware, etc.
- 3) Guidelines for decorations for the fellowship room are the same as auditorium.

5. MUSIC

Every aspect of the marriage ceremony should glorify God. This is true in music that will be used. All music, tapes, CD's, etc. must be submitted to the Minister for approval no later than ninety days prior to the ceremony. Any musicians, vocal or instrumental other than someone from the church must also be approved. This also applies to receptions held at the church.

6. APPAREL

The attire of participants must be modest and in no way diminish worship or focus on God during this special time. This applies to the whole wedding party, musicians and reception personnel if the reception is held in the church facility.

7. RECEPTION

When the reception is held at the church – the Minister's wife will be contacted for counsel or assistance. It is the position of Children's Television Ministries, Inc. that wedding receptions for believers should honor God in purpose and action. For this reason no receptions held on church property will include the use of intoxicating beverages, dancing, or any form of activity which dishonors our Lord Jesus Christ.

8. PHOTOGRAPHY

A photographer may take pictures or videos before and after the wedding ceremony in any part of the building. The photographer may also take pictures of the wedding party as they proceed down the aisle and as they leave the wedding ceremony. Pictures during the actual ceremony should not be taken unless they are out of view of the wedding party.

9. GENERAL GUIDELINES

- a. Rice, birdseed, confetti, etc. may not be thrown inside the church.
- b. Smoking is not permitted in the church building. Alcoholic beverages in any form are not to be served, consumed or allowed at any time on church property.
- c. Any damages to church property should be reported to the pastor.
- d. Dressing rooms will be provided as needed. These rooms will be restored to their functional use after the wedding. All personal items will be removed after the wedding ceremony.



WEDDING APPLICATION

COMPLETE THIS APPLICATION: *Please read CTM's positions related to Marriage listed below, then submit this completed application to the Minister prior to your initial meeting.*

Groom's Name _____

Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Telephone Number _____ (Mobile) _____ (Home)

Birthdate _____ Birthplace (City/State) _____

If you need more space to answer the following questions, please use the back of this sheet.

Do you attend AGAPE CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP?

_____ Regular attender? _____ Member at another church?

If another church, what is the church name and location?

First marriage? Yes No

Comments:

Children? Yes No

If so, how many? _____ Where do they live? _____

Have you accepted Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior? _____ •

How long ago? _____ Where? _____

What does Jesus mean to you?

Do you agree with CTM's positions related to Marriage listed below? Yes No

MARRIAGE

“Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.” Hebrews 13:4

THE BIBLE SAYS...

GENESIS 2:15-25

“And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him. And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him. And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.”

THEREFORE...

WE BELIEVE MARRIAGE IS A COVENANT BETWEEN ONE MAN AND ONE WOMAN FOR LIFE: This marriage covenant, like any other formal agreement, is a single contract mutually forged by two people who have come to a common understanding.

“And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.” Genesis 2:18

WE UNDERSTAND THAT IN MARRIAGE THE TWO LEAVE BEHIND ALL PREVIOUS FAMILY DEPENDENCIES AND BECOME ONE: Marriages only happen when two people agree to make a bond for life.

“Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.” Genesis 2:24

WE AFFIRM THAT BECOMING MARRIED IS A ONE-TIME ACT: Marriage happens at a specific moment in time; when both the man and the woman say, “Yes, I agree to be bound by this marriage covenant starting now.” Most often this occurs during a wedding ceremony. Even

if the couple changes their minds as they walk down the steps to leave the church building, that doesn't matter in God's eyes. To Him they are married for life.

“And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.” Genesis 2:23

WE KNOW THAT SEX DOES NOT CREATE A MARRIAGE: Only the marriage agreement accomplishes this at the moment it is formally made.

“Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS.” Matthew 1:24-25

WE ACCEPT THAT MARRIAGE FORMED OUTSIDE OF THE CHURCH IS VALID: Marriages are considered valid by God whether the two believe in Him or not.

“If a man vow a vow unto the LORD, or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond; he shall not break his word, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth.” Numbers 30:2

WE BELIEVE THAT HOMOSEXUAL AND BLOOD RELATION UNIONS ARE NOT MARRIAGES: God defines marriage as being between one man and one woman for life. Additionally, some specific blood relation unions are not valid marriages in God's sight.

“Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination.” Leviticus 18:22

“None of you shall approach to any that is near of kin to him, to uncover their nakedness: I am the LORD.” Leviticus 18:6

DIVORCE

“For the LORD, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away: for one covereth violence with his garment, saith the LORD of hosts: therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously.” Malachi 2:16

THE BIBLE SAYS...

DEUTERONOMY 24:1-4

“When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house. And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife. And if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth it in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her to be his wife; Her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; for that is abomination before the

LORD: and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance.”

MARK 10:2-7

“And the Pharisees came to him, and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? tempting him. And he answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you? And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away. And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept. But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife;”

THEREFORE...

WE BELIEVE THAT ACCORDING TO THE BIBLE, MARRIAGE IS A LIFETIME COMMITMENT: God hates divorce.

“Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.” Matthew 19:6

WE UNDERSTAND THAT SINCE MARRIAGE INVOLVES TWO SINFUL HUMAN BEINGS, SADLY, DIVORCES DO OCCUR: In the Bible, God layed down laws to protect the divorcées, especially women.

“He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.” Matthew 19:8

WE RECOGNIZE THAT ONE POSSIBLE ALLOWANCE FOR DIVORCE IS MARITAL UNFAITHFULNESS DURING THE BETROTHAL PERIOD: In Jewish custom, a man and a woman were considered married even while they were still “betrothed.”

“But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery:” Matthew 5:32a

WE SEE IT IN SCRIPTURE: An example of this is when Joseph considered divorcing Mary during their engagement period.

“Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily.” Matthew 1:19

WE ACCEPT THAT A SECOND POSSIBLE ALLOWANCE FOR DIVORCE IS DESERTION BY AN UNBELIEVER: When an unbelieving mate does not desire to stay with his or her believing spouse, divorce is allowed.

“But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace.” 1 Corinthians 7:15

WE ENCOURAGE FORGIVENESS: True Christians should be willing to forgive even the most grievous of sins.

“For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.” Matthew 6:14-15

WE STRIVE FOR PEACE: True Christians should always be gentle and soft-hearted.

“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:” Hebrews 12:14

WE LOVE: True Christians love others.

“And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.” Ephesians 4:32

“By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.” John 13:35

REMARRIAGE AFTER DIVORCE

“For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband.” Romans 7:2

THE BIBLE SAYS...

MARK 10:2-12

“And the Pharisees came to him, and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? tempting him. And he answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you? And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away. And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept. But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. And in the house his disciples asked him again of the same matter. And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.”

MATTHEW 5:31-32

“It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication,

causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.”

THEREFORE...

WE BELIEVE ALL REMARRIAGE AFTER DIVORCE IS SIN WHILE BOTH SPOUSES ARE ALIVE: Jesus does not recognize divorce as terminating a marriage in God’s sight. The reason a second marriage is called adultery is because the first one is considered to still be valid.

“Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery.” Luke 16:18

WE UNDERSTAND THAT ALL REMARRIAGE AFTER DIVORCE IS ADULTERY WHETHER IT IS THE HUSBAND OR WIFE WHO DID THE DIVORCING: There are no exceptions mentioned to this rule.

“And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.” Mark 10:11-12

WE AFFIRM THAT ALL REMARRIAGE AFTER DIVORCE IS ADULTERY, EVEN FOR THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN DIVORCED INNOCENTLY: Jesus’ opposition to remarriage seems to be based on the unbreakableness of the marriage bond, in His eyes, by anything but death.

“and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.” Matthew 5:32b

WE BELIEVE DIVORCE IS WRONG, BUT THAT IF IT IS INEVITABLE, THE PERSON WHO DIVORCES SHOULD NOT REMARRY: In cases of unrepentant adultery, or desertion, or brutality, the person who feels constrained to separate should not seek remarriage but should remain single.

“And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband: But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife.” 1 Corinthians 7:10-11

WE ACCEPT THAT REMARRIAGE IS LEGITIMATE ONLY AFTER THE DEATH OF A SPOUSE: Remarriage in such cases is not adultery.

“The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord.” 1 Corinthians 7:39

WE ENCOURAGE THOSE GUILTY OF THIS SIN TO REPENT: Those who are already remarried should acknowledge it as sin and seek forgiveness. They must now remain faithful to their current vows, resting in God’s unfailing promise to forgive sin.

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” 1 John 1:9