

# CULTIVATING CHRISTIAN CULTURE

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## Culture

The word “culture” comes from the Latin word “*cultura*” which means “to care for; cultivate”. Proper cultivation of plants and animals requires tender, loving care. The cultivation of culture requires the same. Producing and sustaining a wholesome culture involves the training, development and refinement of mind and morals. God has not abandoned sinful mankind to subjectively devise a corrupt culture code. Through the precepts of Holy Scripture He has given cultural directives which have historically proven beneficial for successful societies. The Ten Commandments shaped the framework of U.S. culture. A row of the world’s most famous law givers are displayed above the entrance of the U.S. Supreme Court Building. Moses, the largest and most prominent figure, sits in the center holding the Ten Commandments. The two commandment tablets are depicted again on the two huge doors to the courtroom and on the wall above where the Supreme Court Justices sit.

## Violations of God’s Culture Code”

In 1857, the Supreme Court’s notorious “Dred Scott” decision declared that constitutionally no black person could be a U.S. citizen. Abraham Lincoln insisted it did not have a plausible basis in the Constitution and the decision was later reversed. God’s Culture Code was again violated on Jan. 22, 1973, when abortion was declared legal. Recently, on June 26, 2015, it was violated again with a decision declaring same-sex marriage legal. In a Cleveland Plain Dealer article (11/6/15), Dr. George Dent, professor at Case Western Reserve University School of Law, indicated that the same-sex marriage decision is not a credible interpretation of the Constitution. After the 5-4 decision, Chief Justice John Roberts declared that, constitutionally, the majority’s “pretentious” decision was wrong. Justice Antonin Scalia called it “a naked claim” to legislative power. Justices Clarence Thomas and Samuel Alito dissented saying it is beyond dispute that the right to same-



sex marriage is not among those rights secured by the Constitution. Six years ago, Justice Elena Kagan, during her solicitor general hearings, said, “There is no federal constitutional right to same-sex marriage.”

## Legal Issues for Congregations

The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod remains firm in the commitment to perform only heterosexual (male-female marriages). On July 14, 2015, an LCMS webinar was held regarding marriage, life and religious liberty. Jim Campbell, Senior Legal counsel with “Alliance Defending

Freedom”, urged pastors and congregations to put their marriage policies in writing in the most specific way. He strongly suggested: *“The more restrictions a specific church has on weddings, the easier it is to access legal protection.”*

## Other Legal Issues

- > An adverse impact could take place on faith based adoption and foster agencies refusing to place a child with a same-sex couple.
- > Churches and religious organizations may be in jeopardy of losing their tax exempt status.
- > Counselors, lawyers, doctors, etc., who operate consistent with their religious beliefs regarding marriage, may face issues with future licensing.
- > Justice Roberts suggested legal polygamy might be next. Some legal scholars responded, “yes”.

## Christian Stewards of Culture

The drift from God’s Culture Code was caused in part by a sizable number of denominations rejecting the absolute authority of the Scriptures. Society followed suit. The cultural trend can be reversed by energetic personal evangelism. Christ commanded: “Go make disciples!” (Mt. 28:19) Discipling post-modern materialists into Bible believing ambassadors will rescue current culture from its slide into the societal mud of moral chaos.

## RELATED RESOURCES

[www.selc.lcms.org](http://www.selc.lcms.org) - Personal Stewardship

“Same-sex Marriage Issues”

“Christian Caretakers of Culture”

“Current Cultural Isms”

“Personal Evangelism”