***Cohabitation***

**Position**SCCC doesn’t encourage members to live in cohabitation.

**Introduction**The practice of cohabitation is becoming more and more common in the Western world as a substitute for Christian marriage in a secular society. The term cohabitation is usually defined as a short or long-term intimate and sexual relationship outside marriage. In order to evaluate the subject under discussion we have to examine the biblical understanding of marriage and then determine whether cohabitation is or is not compatible with it.

**What is biblical marriage?**

1. *Instituted by God*: It is the common Christian belief that marriage was instituted by God Himself and that it was very good (Gen 1:31; 2:22-24). After creating Adam and Eve God brought them together and defined the way they were to relate to each other (Gen 3:24). Therefore, for Christians, marriage should be a reflection of the original relationship that God established between woman and man, whom He created for marriage.
2. *Communal Witness*: Marriage is not an arrangement made between two individuals in isolation from God and other human beings. In the Scriptures marriage is something that takes place in the sight of God and other persons in order to introduce in the relationship the element of mutual responsibility and legitimacy (john 2:1).
3. *Permanent Commitment*: The union affected in marriage establishes a relationship of intimacy and permanently. In the Bible marriage is not an experiment by which it is to be determined whether or not the couple will remain fully committed to each other. It is the expression of a love that is so pure and so deep that is willing to express itself in a life-long commitment to the other. In this new relationship the spouse leaves mother and father in order to be united to the object of that love (Gen 2:24; Matt 19:6).

**Can cohabitation fulfill criterion of biblical marriage?**

Based on the biblical concept of marriage cohabitation is clearly a practice incompatible with it. Cohabitation is basically a union of two persons without seeking the blessing of God and the formal approval of the community. Therefore, it is fundamentally a relationship for the present without any or little concern for the future of the relationship. The element of mutual commitment in that relationship is significantly less than in a Christian marriage. The reason for many people to live in a cohabitation relationship is they want to test the relationship if they can have a long term relationship. But we can’t find any teaching of “test marriage” in the Bible. The Bible teaching us marriage is lifelong (Matt 19:5-6) commitment who base on sacrifice love from God. Its God’s will that we learn to love each other with his love (Eph 5:21-33).

**Conclusion**

SCCC don’t encourage members to live in cohabitation. We should do all they can to help couples living in cohabitation to be united in Christian marriage.